2008

Rhetoric and defence in early modern England

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NOTE TO USERS

RHETORIC AND DEFENCE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Through the Department of English Language, Literature and Creative Writing
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-42300-4
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-42300-4

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ABSTRACT

Sixteenth century readers were avid consumers of instructional manuals. These manuals have been largely ignored by modern scholarship. I examine two such manuals in detail, George Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence* and Vincentio Saviolo's *Practice*. Both were written by fencing masters living in London in the late sixteenth century and both outline the advantages of a particular style of fencing. Silver and Saviolo engage the same humanist concepts of eloquence and virtue. However, the rhetorical techniques they use emphasize different aspects of eloquence; Silver, following guidelines laid out in manuals by Cicero and Quintilian, uses *enargeia* or *evidentia*—bringing images before the eyes of his readers in order to persuade them—while Saviolo strives to achieve *sprezzatura*—effortless grace—in his writing and to persuade his readers by adhering to the dictates of courtly manners as expressed in Castiglione's *Courtier*.

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Introduction

Early modern readers were avid consumers of instructional manuals. Bennett outlines the variety of books printed between 1475 and 1557; more than half were religious. The rest were divided evenly between law, school textbooks, medicine, information and manuals, arithmetic, astronomy, and popular science, geography, history, news, and literature (Bennett 65-151). Manuals, then, formed as large a part of sixteenth-century reading as works of pleasure. Manuals were published on everything from farming to manners, travelling to duelling. Many of these manuals have been largely ignored by scholars. Among the most neglected are manuals of the sword.

Though historians and even scholars of literature have occasionally borrowed a line or two from a fencing manual to make sense of an historical event or to explain stage instructions in Shakespeare, few have ever considered the rhetorical complexity of these manuals. In this paper, I will examine two such manuals, George Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence* (1599) and *Vincentio Saviolo His Practice* (1595). I will examine, in detail, the rhetorical techniques used by both authors noticing that, while the manuals share many stylistic similarities, the authors use different rhetorical techniques to accomplish similar ends.

Silver and Saviolo wrote their manuals in a highly competitive context. They supported opposing styles of fencing which were popular with distinct classes of English society. Despite the tension of their context, the manuals share many similarities. Both were written by fencing masters living in London in the late sixteenth century, both books are dedicated to the Earl of Essex, both outline the advantages of a particular style of fencing, and both address the men of London. Since Silver and Saviolo compete for the same audience in the same context, they engage the same humanist concepts of eloquence and virtue. However, the rhetorical techniques they use emphasize different

aspects of eloquence; following guidelines laid out in manuals by Cicero and Quintilian, Silver uses *enargeia* or *evidentia*—bringing images before the eyes of his readers in order to persuade them—while Saviolo strives to achieve *sprezzatura*—effortless grace—in his writing and to persuade his readers by adhering to the dictates of courtly manners as laid out in Castiglione's *Courtier*.

I will examine particular rhetorical devices from Silver and Saviolo's manuals very closely in the following chapters to reveal the complex relationship between style and context. I will observe that Silver and Saviolo tailor their style to the expectations, class distinctions, and epistemology of their readers. Finally, I will observe that Silver and Saviolo espouse different understandings of masculinity in their manuals; Silver focusing primarily on demonstrated virtue and Saviolo on performative virtue. This examination will uncover the reasoning behind unusual metaphors like "Fencing ... resemble[s] a Chameleon" and peculiar turns of phrase such as "Italienated fights." I will also question why the authors chose to dedicate their books to Essex, why Silver is so abusive and argumentative, and why Saviolo is so mild-mannered. Why, I will ask, does Silver write about Pygmies and Saviolo about manners in books which are purported to be about the art of fencing? The answers to these questions will reveal that these manuals are meticulously-created performances carefully designed to persuade readers to accept the author's preferred style of fencing.

I will begin my investigation by outlining the historical context in which the manuals were written. The context includes an introduction to our authors and their manuals and a short history of the origins and politics of fencing in London. In the second chapter, I will explore the texts themselves. Focusing on the dedications, I will examine how Silver and Saviolo react differently to the cultural institution of patronage and the literary conventions of dedication. As a social and literary convention, patronage will be discussed in detail, with particular attention paid to the importance of the Earl of

Essex's patronage in both manuals. In the third chapter, I will examine each author's address to their readers noticing differences in structure and style. I will contextualize the choices each author makes by referring to manuals by Cicero, Quintilian, Castiglione, and Puttenham which were in circulation in this period and would likely have influenced Silver and Saviolo's writing. The fourth chapter will examine Silver and Saviolo's interpretations and use of the concepts of masculinity and honour. I will conclude with a discussion of ornament and eloquence in both texts, noticing that while Silver and Saviolo both observe the humanist ideal of eloquence in their writing, eloquence takes a different, sometimes contrary, form in each text.

CHAPTER 1 - CONTEXT

When and why the first fencing schools were founded in England is uncertain. Egerton Castle argues that such schools were established by fighting entertainers to answer public demand for education in the defensive arts (15). Anglin, one of the few modern scholars who has done any extensive research on the schools of defence in London, suggests that "the schools of defense were founded expressly to meet the needs of the lower orders of society who found defensive skills useful in a hostile and violent environment and who found such training a substitute for that provided the upper orders in the art of chivalry" (395). Whatever their origins, entries in civic records and royal edicts directing the temporary closure of schools for rowdiness assure us that, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, individually-owned and operated fencing schools existed in England (Anglin 395). These schools were private, and were founded, owned, operated, and attended by the yeoman class. Since there was no regulating body to which these schools were responsible, masters and their students sometimes became rowdy and violent: Anglin cites the case of Roger le Skirmisour who was indicted in 1311 for "keeping a fence school for divers men and, for enticing thither the sons of respectable persons so as to waste and spend the property of their fathers and mothers upon bad practices" (395). In other countries, particularly Germany, schools and masters organized themselves into guilds and fighting styles were set down in treatises as early as the fourteenth century.[1] However, in England, fencing schools remained fragmented, individualized, and unstable until the sixteenth century.

Surviving documents prove that the fencing schools of London were formed into a corporation with the approval and consent of Henry VIII sometime in the early sixteenth century. After this time, we can assume that schools of defense in England were licenced and subject to the authority of the

1 Fiore dei Liberi, an Italian master, published his *Flos Duellatorum* in 1410 and Hans Talhoffer, a German swordsmaster, published at least three manuals between 1442 and 1467.

"Masters of the Noble Science of Defence." Though Anglin admits that "no formal constitution for the corporation has survived" (397), he catalogues a list of documents, including royal edicts, the issuing of a crest, and the fragmented records of the corporation itself, which serve as evidence for the corporation's existence and authority since sometime before 1540.[2] The corporation established rules, fees, and levels of skill which individuals were to attain through years of training and a series of tests. Fighters passed through the levels of scholar, free scholar, and provost under an established master before becoming masters themselves—free, though not obligated, to establish their own schools.

The formation of the "Masters of the Noble Science of Defence" stabilized and unified the fencing masters of London. But the corporation did not have complete control over all the schools of defense. In late sixteenth-century London, some schools operated with the unofficial approval of the court. Many of these unlicensed schools were operated by foreign masters. The corporation was unable to assert its authority over these masters because the court was fascinated by their stylish fencing techniques. The existence of these unlicensed schools meant that masters seeking to establish authority for themselves as teachers of defence could appeal either to the authority of the corporation or to the authority of fashion. Both choices were problematic; fashion, George Silver reminds us, was unstable—"every day a change, resembling the chameleon" (sig. A3^{r})—but corporation schools held no interest for the elite. Though the ratio of elite to the general population of England was relatively small,[3] Whigham suggests that the elite had "a disproportionate influence on the culture, not least the exemplary functions of its enticing privileges" (10). This "disproportionate influence" meant that, despite its instability, the authority of fashion, which favoured foreign schools, had a much more powerful effect than the established authority of the corporation of English fencing masters.

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2 See Anglin for a more detailed history of the schools of defence in England.

3 Whigham quotes a general population estimate of approximately 4.109 million in England in 1601 compared to an estimate of between 12,000 and 15,000 broad aristocracy and approximately 2,500 actively political elite (10).

The attitude of the elite members of society toward fencing and the schools of defence changed continually between the time of their emergence and the sixteenth century. Originally, the schools catered to the lower orders. However, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the attention of the elite was drawn to English schools of defence. Anglin argues that "the demise of chivalry, the inclusion of defensive arts as an essential part of the curriculum in the education of gentlemen, and the respectability instructors of the defensive arts collectively gained by imposing regulatory controls that curbed the unfair play and indecent behaviour so contributive to violence" (396) combined to make schools of defence attractive to the higher orders of English society. By the end of the sixteenth century, the popularity of English fencing schools was already waning. Foreign fencing schools and what Anglin calls "faddish continental fashion in arms," namely the rapier, appealed more to the elite than traditional, English styles and schools of defence. Rapier fighting was flashy and engaging and the sword itself complemented the wardrobe of the late sixteenth-century gentleman much more effectively than the traditional English short sword.

Perhaps 'novelty' had as much to do with the popularity of foreign styles of fencing as fashion. Howell describes a change in this period as "a shift from the preponderant emphasis upon traditional wisdom to the preponderant emphasis upon new discoveries" (24). Daston and Park describe this development more clearly as a rapidly-growing interest in novelty which coincided with, and fuelled, explorations of the new world. "This age can be called with justice," they write, "an 'age of wonder'. Wonder and wonders commanded attention—as objects of philosophical analysis, as the focus of a self-conscious sensibility, and as a nexus of cultural symbols—not only in the natural philosophy and medicine of the age, but in its literature and art" (172). This growing interest in the novel extended to newly developed theories of fencing as well. Camillo Agrippa, in particular, used mathematical

diagrams and equations to justify and explain his methods, thereby including his style of fencing in the corpus of scientific discoveries made in the period.[4] This alliance with scientific endeavour made the newly-formed, foreign fencing schools far more attractive to the elite than the traditionally-minded English schools. The rapier was a fairly new weapon.[5] It represented the newest styles of fighting which were developed expressly to meet the needs of sixteenth-century fighters. Rapier fighting styles were specially crafted to serve a culture in which a duel was one of the expected ways to deal with a slight to one's honour. A duel between two men with rapiers was engaging to watch, quick to end (especially if they fought only until first blood), and much less dangerous than a fight with traditional short sword. A traditional short sword, which is usually wielded in large, swinging arcs, can sever limbs. Used in the style of the sixteenth century, a rapier is typically a thrusting weapon which (although it can, and did, cause death) is much less likely to deliver a death blow than a short sword. The rapier was a gentleman's weapon, beautiful in itself and in the style in which it was used.

Fencing in the sixteenth century, then, was a discipline fraught with tension. Foreign and British fencing masters were continually at odds with one another. Honour, money, power, and the favour of the elite were continually contested. George Silver and Vincentio Saviolo represent two sides of this struggle. In true sixteenth-century style, they arranged several duels (Silver scornfully recounts, however, that Saviolo and his friend Jeronimo failed to appear at the established times). Silver's accounts of Saviolo are, of course, tinged with resentment, but they reveal very clearly the tension which existed between fencers in London. Saviolo was a threat to Silver's reputation; Silver, in turn,

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4 Agrippa's penchant for mathematical explanations is particularly evident in the illustrations which accompany his *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme con un Dialogo di Filosofia* (1553).

5 "Rapier" refers to a light, thrusting weapon used by civilians for self-defence and duelling. This type of sword originated in the early sixteenth century as a Spanish dress sword and a cut and thrust weapon. By the late sixteenth century, this sword had developed into a longer, primarily thrusting, weapon specifically suited to the mathematically-based fighting styles developed by Camillo Agrippa and Ridolfo Capo Ferro. For details see Agrippa's *Trattato* (1553) and Capo Ferro's *Gran Simulacro Dell'Arte e Dell'Uso della Scherma* (1610).

was a threat to Saviolo's carefully-won acceptance at court. Their manuals, which draw from courtesy and rhetoric literature of the period, are built on a foundation of honour and courtliness.

"Your Honour's in all dutifulness, Vincentio Saviolo"

Vincentio Saviolo was one of those foreign fencing masters who caused the "Masters of the Noble Science of Defence" such difficulty. He was an Italian fencing master who lived and taught in London. The date of his birth is unknown but he tells his readers that he was born in Padua. He records in his *Practice* that he witnessed duels in several different countries before coming to England. Although some information can be gleaned about Saviolo from his own writing, most of what we know of his life is found in Silver's *Paradoxes*, which was, in part, a condemnation of Saviolo's teachings. From Silver, we learn that Saviolo came to England and took over Rocco Bonetti's fencing school with another fencing master named Jeronimo in 1588 or 1589.[6] According to Silver, the two of them taught fencing at the court and in the country for seven or eight years (66). The Stationers' Company recorded Saviolo's death on January 30, 1599, and Silver mentions his death in the *Paradoxes* which was published that same year.

Saviolo's *Practice* (1595) is a practical guide for learning how to fight with a rapier and dagger paired with a discussion of when and why it is appropriate to use such skills. This book was the first practical guide to swordplay to be published in English. Its publication was quickly followed by numerous other treatises by various masters, many of them translated from Spanish and Italian for an English readership.[7] The first section of the book, which covers the practical aspects of rapier and

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6 Rocco Bonetti was one of the most popular fencing masters with the Court. He had a school in Blackfriars and is often credited with influencing the duel scenes in Shakespeare's plays. For more on Bonetti's life and influence, see Anglin.

7 Some of the treatises which were released for English readers include manuals by DiGrassi (1570), Capo Ferro (1610), Hale (1614), Swetnham (1617), and Hope (1687).

dagger fighting, takes the form of a dialogue between a student named Luke and his master Vincentio. I will discuss the implications of Saviolo's decision to use the genre of dialogue in the third chapter.

The second part of the book is entitled *Of Honour and Honourable Quarrels* and focuses on acceptable and unacceptable reasons and situations in which to use the skills learned in the previous book. The impetus for this section is the large number of men who were regularly killed or injured in duels over small quarrels and harmless insults in this period in both England and on the continent.

"George Silver, Gentleman"

George Silver was a strong advocate of the traditional British schools of defence. Although he was clearly educated in the art of fencing and very opinionated about styles of fighting, he is not listed among the members of the "Masters of the Noble Art of Defence" nor are there any records of him having a school anywhere in London. Very little is known about George Silver outside of what he tells us in *The Paradoxes of Defence* and in a second, unpublished work called *Brief Instructions on the Paradoxes of Defence*.[8] Wright records that his father was Richard Silver, of Ropley, Hampshire and his mother was the daughter of the Eighth Baron West of Hampshire. The Public Records Office records his marriage to Mary Heydon at St. Clement Danes church in London on March 24, 1580. He is supposed to have lived in London from 1580 until his death sometime after the publication of *Paradoxes* in 1599. Silver's wife married again, and his *Brief Instructions*, which appears to have been written shortly after *Paradoxes* and intended as a companion work, was never published. These facts both suggest that Silver died young. His brother Tobias—whom Silver writes about in *Paradoxes*—died in Ireland in 1599. Wright suggests that Silver and his brother both enlisted in Essex's Irish

8 *Brief Instructions* was discovered in manuscript in the British Museum and published together with *Paradoxes of Defence* by C.G.R Matthey in 1898 under the title *The Works of George Silver*.

campaign in 1599 and that neither of them returned ("Silver").

Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence* is an argument against Italian fencing masters and rapier fighting in general. His main points include the assertion that rapiers are too long to be useful in any real fighting situation, that Italian fencing styles are flashy rather than effective, and that Italian fencing masters promote offence rather than defence in their teachings, resulting in unmerited deaths. Silver proposes a return to traditional British weapons such as the short sword or backsword which are much more effective in war and less susceptible to the vagaries of fashion.

Prevailing class distinctions in sixteenth-century London also contributed to the tension between Silver and Saviolo. William Harrison wrote in 1575,

> We in England divide our people into four sorts, as gentlemen, citizens or burgess, yeomen, and artificers or labourers. Of gentlemen the first and chief (next the king) be the prince, duke, marquees, earls, viscounts and barons: and these are called gentlemen of the greater sort or (as our common usage is) lords and noblemen: and next unto them be knights, esquires, and last of all they that are simply called gentlemen. (105-6)

Wrightson defines Harrison's categories more clearly; gentlemen are those who are "noble and known," citizens are those who are defined by their occupations (eg. lawyers, doctors, shopkeepers, etc.), yeoman are either freeholders of land or farmers to gentlemen, the rest include "day labourers, husbandmen, artificers, servants, common soldiers" and all those who have "neither voice nor authority in the commonwealth" (19).

Distinctions between classes were often very clearly defined. However, Wrightson observes that social mobility was part of the reality of sixteenth-century class distinctions. He writes, "gentle status itself could be achieved as well as inherited; by obtaining a university degree, by appointment to government or military office or by any man who 'can live without manual labour and thereunto is able and will bear the part, charge, and countenance of a gentleman'" (20). This mobility was a reality

between all classes of society, though far less likely for those of the lowest class. A yeoman could, through a combination of money and lifestyle, set himself up as a citizen; a citizen could, by obtaining money or appointment to a government office, become a gentleman.

Class distinctions and the reality of social mobility had a strong effect on the fencing marketplace. Saviolo relied on the favour of the court and the elite to make his living and needed to cater to their expectations and their interests in order to maintain his popularity. Silver offers a detailed description of Saviolo's school. He writes,

> He disbursed a great sum of money for the lease of a fair house in Warwick Lane, which he called his College, for he thought it great disgrace for him to keep fence-school, he being then thought to be the only famous master of the art of arms in the whole world. He caused to be fairly drawn and set round about his school all the noblemen's and gentlemen's arms that were his scholars, and hanging right under their arms their rapiers, daggers, gloves of mail, and gauntlets. ... He taught none commonly under twenty, forty, fifty, or an hundred pounds. And because all things should be very necessary for the noblemen and gentlemen, he had in his school a large square table with a green carpet, done round with a very broad rich fringe of gold, always standing upon it a very fair stand covered with crimson velvet, with ink, pens, pin-dust, and sealing wax and quiers of very excellent fine paper gilded and ready for the noblemen and gentlemen (upon occasion) to write their letters, being then desirous to follow their fight, to send their men to dispatch their business. (64-5)

From Silver's description, it appears that Saviolo was careful to cater to the needs of the higher orders. His students were the gentlemen and courtiers of London.

Silver, on the other hand, was was an established member of the gentry. His livelihood did not rely on the favour of the elite. His mother was the daughter of Thomas West, the 8th Baron De La Warr (Wilson). Silver's family associations meant that Silver was a gentleman by birth. Furthermore, though no record exists of him holding a particular military office, his evident experience in military matters suggests that he, like his brother, also spent some time in the army. As a gentleman, he would have begun his military career as an officer rather than as a common soldier. Any military accomplishment would have added further to his already established status. Silver's status as a gentleman is undisputed;

the title page of his book names him George Silver, gentleman. We can be certain that Silver's livelihood did not rest on the success of his manual.

CHAPTER 2 - PATRONAGE

The Latin word "ornatus" means both ornament and military equipment (Lewis and Short). The double meaning of this word seems incongruous to us; what possible relationship can there be between the decorative and instruments of war? But, in the sixteenth century, ornament and efficacy were closely tied to one another. This relationship is manifest on a physical level in the rapier itself, which was not only a functional weapon but also complemented the wardrobe of the courtier who wore it. The relationship is more meaningfully evident in the complex rules that governed courtly behaviour. Courtiers embraced both ornament and efficacy by practicing the art of *sprezzatura*—effortless grace. "The whole art," Castiglione writes, "consists in saying things in such a way that they shall not seem to be said to that end, but let fall so naturally that it was impossible not to say them, and while seeming to avoid self praise, yet to achieve it" (28). Disguising art behind their speech, manners, dress, etc., courtiers sought to improve their reputation with other courtiers, thereby improving their own influences on the delicate balances of power and politics at court. *Sprezzatura*—one of the defining features of an ideal courtier—unified the functional and the aesthetic in the same way that a rapier is both a weapon of defence and part of a gentleman's wardrobe.

In instructional literature of the period, the relationship between ornament and efficacy is even more telling. Javitch argues that the court's "playful and aesthetic inclinations" resulted in a deep divide between the functional, persuasion-driven prose of humanist scholars and the decorative, pleasure-inducing poetry of the courtier (15). Those who wrote to persuade in this context found themselves precariously balanced between two extremes. On the one hand was the rhetoric taught in grammar schools. The intention of this rhetorical education was "to make men capable of communicating

political and ethical truths so persuasively that they would thereby reform and civilize society" (Javitch 23). On the other hand, the actuality and organisation of court life demanded entertainment and aesthetic pleasure. Writers were forced to draw from both to accomplish their goals. As Ottaviano points out in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, to persuade a prince to virtue one must decorate the path with

> shady leafage and [strew] it with lovely flowers to relieve the tedium of the weary journey to one whose strength is slight; and now with music, now with arms and horses, now with verses, now with love talk ... to keep his mind continually busied with worthy pleasures and yet always impressing upon him also, as I have said, some virtuous practice along with these allurements, and playing upon him with salutary craft; like cunning doctors, who often anoint the edge of the cup with a sweet cordial, when they wish to give some bitter-tasting medicine to sick and overdelicate children. (236-7)

Writers who address the elite must be like cunning physicians as well. The two kinds of poetical ornament George Puttenham describes in his *Art of English Poesie* (1589)—"one to satisfy and delight the ear only by a good outwardly show set upon the matter with words, and speeches smoothly and tunably running: another by certain intendments or sense of such words and speeches inwardly working a stir to the mind" (119)—demonstrate that ornament, in both an effective and decorative sense, is the means by which courtiers and writers can accomplish the double purpose of pleasing and persuading. Puttenham demonstrates clearly that an understanding of the double function of language is essential to writers and to courtiers:

> though the language of our poet or maker be pure and cleanly and not disgraced by any by such vicious parts as have been before remembered in the chapter of language, be sufficiently pleasing and commendable for the ordinary use of speech; yet is not the same so well appointed for all purposes of the excellent poet as when it is gallantly arrayed in all his colours which figure can set upon it. (132)

Writers like Silver and Saviolo who write with the undeniable intention to persuade their readers must rely on Puttenham's advice and balance their texts carefully between the extremes of didacticism and

pure entertainment. They must practice the art of *sprezzatura* in their writing, persuading apparently effortlessly, strewing their texts with "lovely flowers" to make them palatable and persuasive to their readers. In this way, the art of *poesis* and the art of *sprezzatura* are variations of the same system of discourse and conduct. Writers balance ornament and efficacy by using colourful metaphors and vivid description to present an argument; courtiers accomplish the same balance when they present themselves to the court through a combination of dress, flattery, and mannerisms.

Courtesy, which is the subject of many manuals in the sixteenth century, could be used to ornament speech (or writing) for the double purpose of decoration and effectiveness. "Courtesy," Whigham reminds us, was "a repertoire of strategies ... precisely a tool for 'making places' in the social order" (4-5). In the hands of Silver and Saviolo, courtesy, and the conventional forms it takes, serves as a way to establish status and authority as teachers of the sword. Such places were carved out through "self presentation," most notably in the complex system of patronage which was essential to the function of the Elizabethan court.

Literary patronage was a system whereby aspiring authors sought out the support of established courtiers as a way to help distinguish themselves from other writers. "The key to success," Brennan tells us, "frequently lay in securing the personal support of an individual who was willing to act as a sponsor, employer, defender, literary critic, or even as a friend, thus enabling the writer to rise above the shoals of other aspiring courtiers who could also deftly wield a pen" (1). The patronage system was not wholly focused on the aspiring men who were supported by it. The patrons who provided support and protection were repaid for their money and effort by the improved reputation certain social ties could establish. The system was not limited to literature. Whigham argues that "Courtiers of all ranks were by turns ... suitors to their superiors and patrons to their inferiors." Patronage, he argues, was "a

web of local bonds among courtiers of all subranks" (12). Silver and Saviolo both acknowledge and engage the "web" of patronage when they dedicate their manuals to the Earl of Essex.

Saviolo's address is standard. He writes:

> To the Right Honourable my singular good lord, Robert Earl of Essex and Ewe, Viscount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Bourgier and Louain, Master of the Queen's Majesty's horse, Knight of the most noble order of the Garter, and one of her Highness's most honourable Privy Council.
>
> Having of late, (right Honourable) completed this simple Discourse, of managing weapons, and dealing in honourable quarrels (which I esteem an Introduction to Martial affairs) I have thought good to dedicate the same unto your Honour, as unto him whose bounty most bindeth me: whose valour inforceth all soldiers to acknowledge you the English Achilles: whose favouring of good literature celebrateth your name for the students Mecenas: whose benign protection and provision for strangers, maketh you reported of as their safe sanctuary. (4-5)[9]

This passage is only the beginning of a dedicatory letter which spans several pages, yet even in these few lines Saviolo has accomplished several things. First, he has flattered Essex by praising his valour and his generosity. At the same time, in the double nature of *sprezzatura*, he has, seemingly inadvertently, pointed out to his readers that he is associated with Essex. This association establishes authority for Saviolo who, as a foreigner and newcomer to England, would otherwise have little authority. The double purpose of this dedication mirrors the mutually beneficial patron / servant relationship. This letter tells readers that Saviolo has the attention, favour, and protection of Essex; it also points out Essex's generosity. Essex's favour lends validity to Saviolo's writing and teaching, but it also builds up Essex's reputation, making his position at court stronger by emphasizing his good qualities to the queen and other courtiers. Edmund Spenser reflects on this relationship in a dedication of his own to the Earl of Northumberland where he writes:

> The sacred Muses have made always claim
> To be the nurses of nobility,

9 Spelling and italics have been modernized in all passages from Silver and Saviolo.

> And registers of everlasting fame,
> To all that arms profess and chivalry.
> Then by like right the noble progeny,
> Which them succeed in fame and worth, are tied
> T'embrace the service of sweet Poetry
> By whose endeavours they are glorified,
> And eke from all, of whom it is envied,
> To patronise the author of their praise,
> Which gives them life, what else would soon have died,
> And crowns their ashes with eternal bays. (qtd. Brennan 9)

The relationship between writers and their patrons, Spenser suggests, was one that benefited both parties. The author feeds their patron's reputation and, in return, the patron supports and protects the author.

Saviolo's flattery of Essex in his dedicatory epistle is carefully worded to ensure that both of these purposes are accomplished. He alternates compliment—"whose valour inforceth all soldiers to acknowledge you the English Achilles"—with disguised praise for his own work—"whose favouring of good literature celebrateth your name for the students Mecenas." The choice of Achilles is pointed. Achilles was famous for his uncontested skill as a warrior. He was also continually helped by the gods. Lattimore writes that "[Achilles'] supremacy is powered by gods who favour, strengthen, and protect him. ... When he shouts Athene shouts with him. ... Thetis carries his case to Zeus. ... Hephaistos makes him immortal armour" (47). By associating Essex with Achilles, Saviolo overtly praises his value as a soldier while, more subtly, suggesting his favour with, and proximity to, higher powers, namely Elizabeth. Recalling Essex's relationship with the queen sets him squarely alongside Saviolo in the "web" of patronage. In many ways, Saviolo suggests, they are equals, both striving for favour from those above them.

Saviolo's mention of Maecenus is equally complex. Maecenus was a Roman politician whose name "became proverbial as the greatest patron of poets" ("Maecenus" Roberts). He was the patron of

Horace and Virgil amongst many others. Equating Essex with Maecenus allows Saviolo to set the patron / servant relationship between himself and Essex in a long tradition. Comparing Essex to Maecenus flatters Essex but it also provides him with a standard of behaviour, praising him not as he is but as he should be.

Silver, like Saviolo, begins his dedication with Essex's full title followed by carefully constructed flattery. He writes:

> To the Right Honourable, my singular good Lord, Robert Earl of Essex and Ewe, Earl Mashall of England, Viscount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Bourchier and Louiane, Master of the Queen's Majesty's Horse, and of the Ordenance, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and one of her Highness's most honourable Privy Council.[10]
>
> Fencing (Right honourable) in this new fangled age, is like our fashions, every day a change, resembling the Chameleon, who altereth himself into all colours save white: so Fencing changeth into all wards save the right. That it is so, experience teacheth us: why it is so, I doubt not but your wisdom doth conceive. There is nothing permanent that is not true, what can be true that is uncertain? How can that be certain, that stands upon uncertain grounds? (sig. Aiii^{r})

On the page facing this dedication is a large rendering of Essex's coat of arms (see figure 1) which is topped with a crown and surrounded by a garter bearing the statement "honi soyt quy mal y pense."[11] The function of this rendering is to present a visual statement of Essex's reputation. The crown announces Essex's status as an Earl ("coronet" Fairbairn 143) and the garter and motto announce that he is a Knight of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of English knights. Thus, this rendering is a visual reminder of Essex's hereditary title and status. Such images were a common, but not necessary, accessory to the letter of dedication in sixteenth century books. Saviolo's text has no such rendering. The page facing Saviolo's dedication is blank. What Saviolo accomplishes with his carefully worded flattery of Essex, Silver accomplishes, without words, by including Essex's arms. He acknowledges and

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10 The additional titles in Silver's address were ones which were awarded to Essex between 1595, when Saviolo published his book, and 1599 when Silver published his.

11 The motto is in Old French and means "Shame upon him who thinks evil of it."

affirms the patron / servant relationship between him and Essex by including Essex's arms and launching, without preamble, into his argument. Essex's arms—which combine the crests of his many noble ancestors[12]—and his long list of titles are sufficient, in Silver's argument, to illustrate Essex's status and Silver's intimacy with Essex. Silver's abrupt beginning lacks the delicacy Saviolo demonstrated in his dedication and yet it still conveys the impression that he on close terms with Essex—close enough terms, perhaps, that flattery is not necessary.

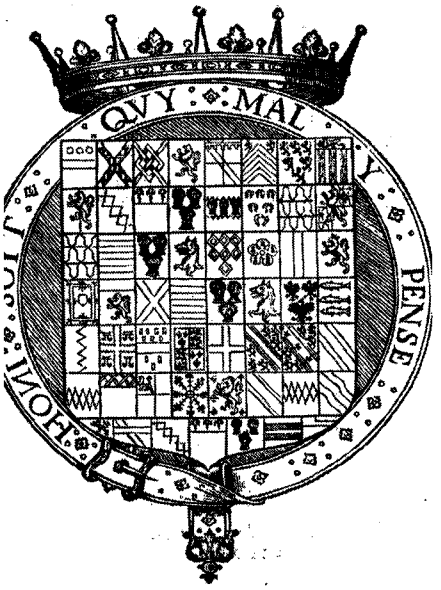

Figure 1 – Essex's Coat of Arms

Though Silver does not use ornamental speech in the same way Saviolo does, ornament is still essential to his text. Where Saviolo uses double-edged flattery to both please and improve his reputation, Silver uses visual ornament—a rendering of Essex's arms—to accomplish the same double task. The arms are visually decorative; they are also a visual description of Essex's status. In so doing, Silver points to Essex's reputation and improves, by association, his own.

The rest of Silver's dedication is devoted almost entirely to rhetorical argument. He begins with

12 See Fairbairn for details on the individuals associated with each crest.

a colourful metaphor—fencing is a "Chameleon, who altereth himself into all colours save white." This metaphor is an example of one of the "figures rhetorical" which Puttenham advocates. "This figure," Puttenham writes of metaphor, "serves for amplification, and also for ornament, and to enforce persuasion mightily" (207). Silver's chameleon metaphor does all of these things; it brings a colourful, decorative image into the mind, it emphasizes his point about the changeability of fencing styles, and, thereby, his assertion that Italian fencing styles are not reliable becomes more acceptable to his readers. This metaphor would have appealed to the "playful and aesthetic inclinations" (Javitch 15) of the court but the blatantly argumentative lines which follow it would have been much less welcome in a court which prized beauty and graceful wit over clearly-argued points. Javitch argues that didactic oratory was incompatible with court values in this period because

> it is an art devised for a political order where freer conditions not only condone but demand direct, clear, and openly aggressive communication. Such discourse, determined by the need to win the consent of the masses, cannot suit and is therefore ineffective in a system where political power, vested in a hereditary ruler, no longer depends on, in fact disregards, the disposition of the commoners. (46)

Silver's obviously rhetorical argument, then,—"There is nothing permanent that is not true; what can be true that is uncertain? How can that be certain, that stands upon uncertain grounds?"—would have been much less effective with a courtly readership than Saviolo's subtle manners. Silver crafts an elaborate argument carefully framed with metaphors:

> The mind of man a greedy hunter after truth, finding the seeming truth but changing, not always one, but always diverse, forsakes the supposed, to find out the assured certainty: and searching ever where save where it should, meets with all save what it would ... as in all other things (Right honourable) so in Fencing. (sig. Aiii^{v})

According to rhetoric manuals of the period, his argument should be effective. But he lacks the subtlety, the grace that Saviolo demonstrates and the court demands. As Javitch reminds us, at court

"beauty will captivate ... more effectively than unmitigated moral counsel" (44).

"My Singular Good Lord, Robert Earl of Essex"

Both Silver and Saviolo choose to dedicate their manuals to the Earl of Essex; the choice is not an artbitrary one. Brennan reminds us that "the ambitious writer was expected to keep a sharp eye out for prospective patrons, calculating from whom he might gain the most advantage" (2). Essex was a powerful force in the court at the time both these books were written and the reputation he built for himself was particularly relevant to the causes of both authors.

Hammer records that Robert Devereux was the second Earl of Essex. He inherited the position from his father Walter Devereux in 1576 at the age of 11. He made an uneventful entrance at court in September 1585 but his association with Lord Burghley, who became the queen's chief advisor, his close relationship with his stepfather Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the queen's great favourite, and his ties with Sir Phillip Sidney (his stepfather's nephew) ensured that he did not go unnoticed for long. What is, perhaps, most important for Silver and Saviolo is the fact that Essex's first appointment was military. Leicester appointed him colonel-general of the cavalry when he marched on the Netherlands in January 1586. Essex also made his debut as a jouster that same year and made a point of appearing in public displays of swordplay and jousting for the rest of his political career. Essex made a military name for himself in the battle at Zutphen, in September 1586. He was knighted for his bravery in this battle, the same battle in which Sidney was mortally wounded. Before he died, Sidney left Essex one of his two best swords, symbolically passing on to Essex his role as Leicester's second in command and the knightly champion of international Protestantism (Hammer). When he returned to England, shortly thereafter, he caught the queen's eye immediately.

With the help of Leicester, who was a master at gaining the queen's favour, Essex began to

build his political reputation (Hammer). By the time Silver and Saviolo dedicate their books to him, he was at the height of his career. He was unrelentingly ambitious and passionately devoted to the idea of England as a military power. Despite his fervour, Essex never managed to distinguish himself as a brilliant military leader in battle; most of his military endeavours, with a few exceptions, were failures. But he managed to retain the image Sidney and Leicester helped him build by continuing to champion military endeavours against the Spanish. His support of continued campaigning against the Spanish often put him at odds with the queen, who was increasingly reluctant to expend military force on a seemingly nonexistent threat.

Essex's relationship with the queen was notoriously difficult. The queen was famously fond of him (Essex did much to emphasize this point to the general public and the rest of the court) but Essex tested her affection regularly. In 1589, Hammer notes that he left London quietly to join a British counter-Armada which was sailing against Spain and Portugal which the queen had expressly forbidden him to join. Sometime in 1590, he married Sir Philip Sidney's widow, Frances, without the queen's knowledge or permission. The queen was enraged at both of these actions but Essex always managed to appease her and retain his favoured position at court.

In the mid-1590s, Essex was at the height of his power. The queen was pleased with him and he was awarded the much sought-after position of member of the privy council. His success was short-lived. By the end of the 1590s, Essex was accused of trying to prevent peace with Spain. His relationship with the queen was less accommodating than it had been and his rivals at court criticized his actions continually. His frustrations mounted until he famously turned his back on the queen in 1598 in front of the whole court. She struck him in the head for his rudeness and he withdrew from court for a time. She was not quick to forgive him and his absence from court emphasized to his rivals

that he was not so necessary as he made himself seem. Essex wrote an *Apologie* defending himself and his actions in the form of a letter to Anthony Bacon. This letter was widely circulated, though Essex denied all knowledge or involvement in its release. It was officially published in 1603. In an attempt to salvage his reputation, Essex took up the command of the English campaign in Ireland. He left for Ireland in 1599. This campaign is the same one in which Toby Silver died and in which we suppose George Silver himself might have died.

The campaign in Ireland was fraught with delays and failures. Rather than bolstering his reputation, the events in Ireland completely undermined his remaining power at court. On his return to England, he was imprisoned for disobeying the queen's orders (yet again) and remained imprisoned for nearly a year before he was put on trial for his actions. He was released in early 1600 but was banned from the court. In 1601, desperate and ruined, he led a group of three hundred men in a march on London, calling for support from the citizenry as they marched. The intention was to take control of the court in order to denounce Essex's enemies to the queen. The people did not respond to Essex's call and the small army was quickly arrested. Essex was tried for treason in February 1601. Elizabeth required the churches to preach against him in order to blacken his public reputation which, despite his failures, remained high. He was beheaded on February 25, 1601.[13]

Saviolo's dedication to Essex was given at the height of his political career in 1595. Silver's came later, in 1599, when Essex's political situation was beginning to destablize. For Saviolo and Silver, Essex served as an ideal patron mainly because of his influential position at court. He was also one of those patrons of literature who was a writer himself (Brennan 7). But Essex was more than just a courtier with influence; he was also a master of public image. For much of his career, Essex displayed

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13 For a thorough and insightful rendering of Essex's life see Lacey's *Robert, Earl of Essex: An Elizabethan Icarus* (1971).

all the good qualities of an ideal courtier. Essex delighted in the subtleties of the court. He was a master at using "*imprese*, striking combinations of mottos and images which were intended to demonstrate the contestant's wit and imagination to all who were knowledgeable enough to decipher them .... He clearly relished the intellectual challenge of this rarefied art form and the licence it provided to make statements which, in other circumstances, might have been regarded as outrageous" (Lacey 202-3). Essex's mastery of *imprese* and the other graces of courtiership would have made him an ideal patron for Saviolo who was clearly trying to present himself as an ideal courtier, practiced in the art of effortless grace.[14]

Essex was not all subtlety, however. He also frequently indulged in martial display to "encourage popular support for the war and for his own pre-eminent role in it" (Lacey 200). From the time of his first appearance at court, Essex cultivated an image of himself as an ideal knight. He presented himself as the champion of the queen and protector of the English nation. Despite his never actually holding the title of queen's champion and the near failure of almost all his military endeavours on behalf of international Protestantism, he managed to instill in the minds of the public an image of himself as a knightly champion of the English people, which long outlasted his influence at court and even outlived his trial and execution for treason. That image was largely cultivated in the tilt yard. By appearing in tournaments in which he displayed his jousting and swordfighting abilities, Essex created a reputation for himself not only with the court but with the common people and the soldiers he led to war. Lacey notes that Essex's cultivation of his public image through display of his talents was an inherent part of his dedication to the cult of honour. This arose, in part, out of changes in the educational system of the elite. One of the fundamental changes, Whigham notes, was "the

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14 Puttenham discusses *imprese* in detail on pages 24-5 of his *Arte*.

recapitulation of the knightly ideal, stressing the physical exercises of the battlefield" (13). Essex strove to achieve this knightly ideal throughout his career. "At the heart of this code," Lacey writes, "was the idea that noble virtue should be both displayed and recognized publicly" (200).

Essex's presentation of himself as an ideal knight, a soldier concerned with the defence of his honour and his country, would have appealed to Silver's practical aims. As the embodiment of perfect honour, Essex would serve as an ideal patron for Silver whose goal was to institute the use of swords which would be practical in war as well as in individual defence. From his treatment of camps and practical applications of the sword in war, we can assume that Silver was a soldier himself. Essex's less subtle displays of martial prowess and his tendency to lead by example would have made him a compelling figure to a fellow soldier. Later in his dedication, Silver reinforces this idea when he writes, "and because I know such strange opinions have need of stout defence I humbly crave your Honourable protection as one in whom the true nobility of our virtuous ancestors hath taken up his residence" (sig. Av^{v}). Clearly, what Silver admires about Essex is his ability to provide "stout defence" and his "true nobility."

Essex, then, was an ideal patron to both Silver and Saviolo, though for different reasons. His skill in the niceties of court, his mastery of *sprezzatura*, made him a perfect choice for Saviolo who intended to portray himself as the perfect courtier. His martial skills and his dedication to the cult of honour made him the perfect ally for Silver who sought to institute practical reforms to the art of swordfighting in England. Further, Essex serves as an example which is equally compelling to both the general public and the elite although, I would argue, Silver is much more interested in the multi-layered nature of Essex's reputation than Saviolo is. Saviolo's dedication to Essex simply fulfills the conventions of the patron-servant relationship. He appeals to Essex for the benefit of his position at

court, the example he sets as an ideal courtier, and the added bonus of the public emphasis he puts on fencing as an important skill. Saviolo does not attempt to do more with his dedication than to fulfill these conventional expectations. Silver, on the other hand, uses his dedication to Essex in a much more complicated way. To begin with, Silver's dedication comes at a time when Essex's position at court is no longer so stable. Nor would it be nearly as inspiring to members of the court as it would have been in 1595 when Saviolo wrote his dedication. Was Silver's choice of Essex as a patron a mistake which resulted from his lack of familiarity with happenings at court? Certainly Saviolo would have considered addressing his book to a different patron if he published his book in 1599. Or did Silver intend his work for a wider audience than Saviolo did? I would argue that Silver intended his book to be read by a wide audience of British readers, including, certainly, the queen, the court and the elite, but also the general public and even Silver's fellow soldiers. Elizabeth's orders for the church to preach against Essex suggest that Essex's reputation was still strong with the public and the army in 1599. Silver frames his argument as an appeal to the entire nation of England and his choice of patron emphasizes that he intended his book to be read by more than just the elite.

Essex himself would have gained different things from his association with the two manuals. Saviolo is particularly concerned with portraying himself as a ideal courtier who has mastered the art of courtly manners while Silver focuses on established tradition and the physical demonstration of virtue and truth. By allowing Saviolo's dedication, Essex associates himself with an example of ideal courtiership and reminds Saviolo's readers of his own skill in courtly manners. Likewise by allowing Silver's dedication, Essex associates himself with established English traditions which value physical demonstration. His social tie with Silver reminds readers of his own skill both on the battlefield and in the tournaments held at court. Silver's dedication was a particularly strategic move for Essex. Coming,

as it did, in 1599 when he was out of favour with the queen and the court it served as an important reminder of the qualities which brought him to favour in the first place.

Chapter 3 – Structure and Style

When readers opened either of these two manuals, they would first encounter the title page. In fact, as Voss emphasizes and Saenger reiterates, readers would frequently encounter the title page before it was a page at all. Printers would often print extra copies of the title page and post them around the city as advertisements (Voss 102, Saenger 38). For both manuals, then, the title page performs the important function of introducing and selling the book to a potential reader.

Saviolo's title page (figure 2) demonstrates immediately the significance of Saviolo's reputation. The manual is not titled "A Treatise on Swordfighting," or something equally explanatory; rather, the book is named for its author, *Vincentio Saviolo his Practice,* emphasizing the name "Vincentio" by which he was known in London. The manual rests on Saviolo's reputation. He appears as a character in the book playing the part of master in a dialogue between master and student. We are reminded that it is him who is speaking over and over again with the "V." which precedes everything his character says and the running title, "Vincentio Saviolo his Practice," states his name to us again and again as we turn the pages.

While these structural decisions *seem* very important to the effectiveness of Saviolo's argument, Saenger suggests that many such decisions were actually made by the printer to make the book more appealing to readers. "The title page," Saenger argues, "does more than simply provide a rubric; it offers an opportunity for the publisher to construct a rhetoric of promotion and anticipation by epitomizing the genre and content of the book, promoting its most attractive features, defining its readership, and establishing its authority" (38).[15] In Saviolo's book, these purposes mesh flawlessly. Saviolo builds his manual around his popularity with the court and his publishers structure the title

15 For more on the advertising function of prefatory material, see Voss.

page on the same premise, selling his book to the public on the basis of his reputation.

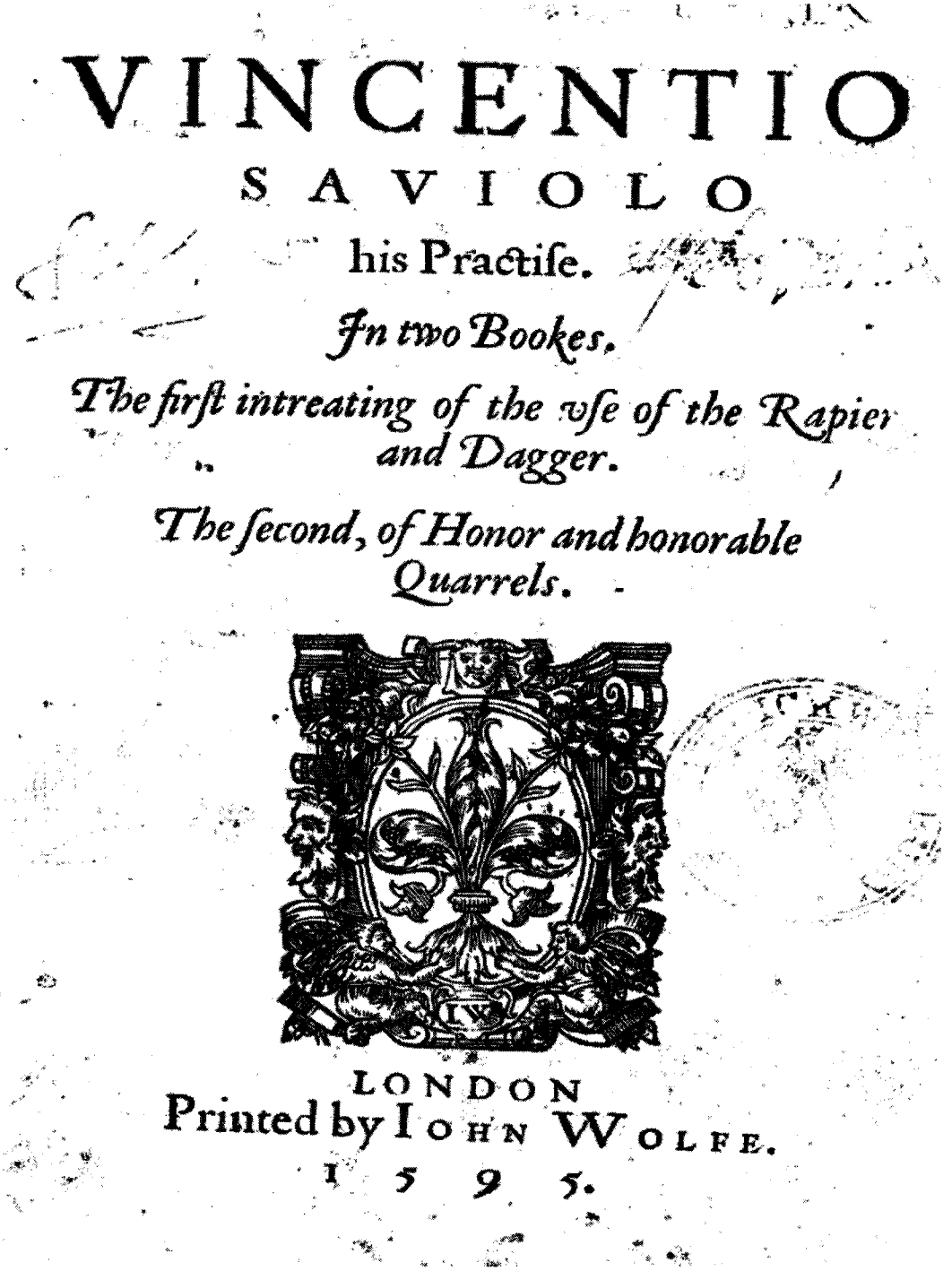
VINCENTIO
SAVIOLO
his Practiſe.
In two Bookes.
The firſt intreating of the vſe of the Rapier and Dagger.
The ſecond, of Honor and honorable Quarrels.
LONDON
Printed by IOHN WOLFE.
1595.

Figure 2 – Saviolo's Title Page

Style choices Saviolo *did* make, such as genre, also focus on his reputation, emphasizing his skill in courtly manners. The genre Saviolo chose for his *Practice* is "documentary dialogue." Cox describes the documentary dialogue as one in which real people appear, as opposed to the more universally-used style of dialogue, which featured fictional or allegorical characters. Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), which features the Duke of Urbino as its main character, is an example of documentary dialogue. Other varieties of dialogue were popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth century but they usually overtly distinguished themselves from the "essentially Italian form" of the documentary dialogue (Cox 23). For example, one English author prefaced his dialogue by writing "Here are no particular characters attempted, nor is there any intention to provoke or expose any person living" (qtd. Cox 23). By using documentary dialogue, Saviolo emphasizes his status as a fashionable Italian fencing master in England. The genre also ties him to the birthplace of courtly manners. Some of the most famous masters of courtly manners, Castiglione and Romei, were born and lived in Italy. Furthermore, both Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528) and Hannibal Romei's *The Courtier's Academy* (1546) were written as dialogues. Using the same genre as these masters of courtly manners connects him even more closely to the Italian courtly traditions he strives to emulate.

Saviolo's dedication is a perfect example of his meticulous imitation of an ideal of courtly behaviour. Saenger describes some of the commonplaces of dedicatory epistles. "When dedicatory epistles are humble," he writes,

> they praise the patron and abase the author (as unlearned) and the text (as full of errors) .... If the patron approves of the text, the rhetoric usually goes, it is because of the patron's goodwill and charity, not the text's value ... whenever New Year's Day is available as an excuse, publication tends to be cast as such a gift. (55)

When we read Saviolo's dedication with these commonplaces in mind, we discover that Saviolo was so

eager to follow the expected format for a dedication that he used them all. To fully appreciate Saviolo's adherence to the expected format of a dedication, I quote his dedicatory epistle in full.

> Having of late, (Right Honourable) compiled this simple discourse, of managing weapons and dealing in honourable quarrels (which I esteem an introduction to martial affairs) I have thought good to dedicate the same unto your Honour, as unto him whose bounty most bindeth me: whose valour inforceth all soldier to acknowledge you the English Achilles: whose favouring of good literature celebrateth your name for the students Maecenas: whose benign protection and provision for strangers maketh you reported of as their safe sanctuary. This work I must needs confess, is far unworthy your Lordship's view in regard either of method or substance: and being much unperfecter than it should have been if I had had copy of English to have expressed my meaning as I would. But I humbly beseech your good Lordship to accept this book as a new year's gift proceeding from a mind most dutifully affected toward you, that wisheth and prayeth that your Honour may enjoy many good and prosperous years: and is presented by him that is and will be ready every year, day, and hour, to live and die at your Lordship's foot to do you service. (sig. Aiii^{r}-iv^{r})

I have already discussed Saviolo's flattery of Essex. Saviolo abases himself by claiming to have an incomplete knowledge of English and his manual as being a "simple discourse" and "far unworthy." He also suggests that Essex's inclination to provide for strangers is far more likely to be responsible for his approval of the manual than the worth of the manual itself. And, finally, he casts the book as a New Year's gift. Saviolo's dedication is conventional. Nothing about it is unusual, nothing catches the imagination or draws the reader in. The dedication does, however, perform the two most important functions of a dedicatory epistle: it associates the author with a patron, and it is "at the very least a demonstration of the author's courtliness and familiarity with high speech and high society" (Saenger 55). Carefully following all the commonly-established rules of dedication writing, Saviolo produces an example of his skill in courtly mannerisms, demonstrating to his readers that he is well versed in courtly etiquette.

Saviolo cultivates this connection to courtly ideals in his address to the reader as well. He writes:

> The means whereby men from time to time have been preferred even to the highest degrees of greatness and dignity have ever been and are of two sorts, Arms and Letters: weapons and books, as may most plainly be proved out of antique and modern histories. Let it not seem strange unto any man that I have placed Arms before Letters, for in truth I have found by observing the course of times, and by comparing the occurents of former ages with those which have fallen out and followed (as it were by succession) in later years, that the first Princes and patrons of people did obtain their titles and dominions by force of Armes and that afterwards learning and virtue did (as it were by degrees) grow and succeed for the making and establishing of good orders, customs, and laws amongst them. (sig. Bi^{r}).

In this passage Saviolo overturns a commonly understood order which is spelled out in rhetoric manuals of the period. These manuals argue that rhetoric and eloquence, not strength of arms, found society. Thomas Wilson writes that God

> gave his appointed ministers knowledge both to see the natures of men, and also granted them the gift of utterance, that they might with ease win folk at their will, and frame them by reason to all good order ... these appointed of God called them together by utterance of speech and persuaded them what was good, what was bad and what was gainful for mankind ... after a certain space they became through nurture and good advisement, of wild, sober: of cruel, gentle: of fools, wise: and of beasts, men. (sig. Avii^{r})

Saviolo's address to the reader directly contradicts this order, placing "arms before letters." By rejecting the value of rhetoric in favour of the sword, Saviolo separates himself from humanists who value eloquence as the highest virtue. Saviolo appears to have rejected humanist values outright in this address, presenting himself as a man who views the world in a completely different light than his contemporaries. However, in the rest of his manual, particularly the section which deals with honourable quarrels, Saviolo demonstrates a very humanist approach to duelling, urging his readers to avoid fighting wherever possible and presenting them with ways to "accord the parties challenging and challenged, bringing them from their hostile threats to loving embraces: and of quarreling foes to become loving friends, all causes of discontent being taken away on either side" (sig. Pi^{r}). Saviolo pretends to reject humanism but in his own writing and the behaviour he demands of his readers he follows the tenets of humanism very closely.

Saviolo's address to the reader closely resembles the kind of courtly discussions over dinner that are featured in Castiglione. It carries the tone of a "witty good point" rather than the "complex extended structures of developed argument" (Whigham 30). Saviolo justifies his interest in swordfighting by rooting it in a long history of courtly conduct: "the first Princes and patrons of people did obtain their titles and dominions by force of arms." He accomplishes this justification in the tone of a pleasant recounting of an historical trend, once again demonstrating his mastery of *sprezzatura* by catering to the pleasure of his readers and proving his point, as it were, inadvertently. Saviolo's style in this passage follows precisely the advice Puttenham gives writers. Puttenham writes,

> there [is] yet requisite to the perfection of this art, another manner of exoneration, which resteth in the fashioning of our maker's language and style, to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mind as the ear of the hearers with a certain novelty and strange manner of conveyance, disguising it no little from the ordinary and accustomed: nevertheless making it nothing more unseemly or misbecoming, but rather decenter and more agreeable to any civil ear and understanding. (114)

By pretending to contradict one of the tenets of humanism, Saviolo "disguises his writing from the ordinary and accustomed" in order to "delight and allure the minds" of his readers. However, he keeps his writing from becoming "unseemly" or "misbecoming" by retaining humanist values. When Puttenham's advice is considered alongside the example of Castiglione's and Romei's ideal courtier (and Puttenham's readers would certainly have been familiar with both), an ideal of elegant, witty, conversational prose emerges. Saviolo fashions his style to appeal to a readership which values that kind of elegance.

Silver's title page (figure 3) prepares the reader for a much more argumentative text. The title, *Paradoxes of Defence*, frames Silver's book as an important philosophical discussion rather than a

PARADOXES
OF DEFENCE,

WHEREIN IS PROVED THE TRVE grounds of Fight to be in the ſhort auncient weapons, and that the ſhort Sword hath aduantage of the long Sword or long Rapier. And the weakeneſſe and imperfection of the Rapier-fights diſplayed. Together with an Admonition to the noble, ancient, victorious, valiant, and moſt braue nation of Engliſhmen, to beware of falſe teachers of Defence, and how they forſake their owne naturall fights: with a briefe commendation of the noble ſcience or exerciſing of Armes.

By George Siluer Gentleman.

LONDON,
Printed for Edvvard Blount.
1599.

Figure 3 – Silver's Title Page

pleasurable conversation. "Paradox" in the 16th century usually refers to a commonly held belief that is actually wrong. This definition corresponds to the *OED* definition which reads: "A statement or tenet contrary to received opinion or belief, *esp.* one that is difficult to believe." The word "paradox" could also refer to a piece of prose or poetry which explores and explains an existing paradox (John Donne's *Paradoxes and Problems* [1633] is an example of such a work). By titling his work *Paradoxes of Defence*, Silver prepares his readers for an argumentative text which will prove something that they will likely find difficult to believe.

Silver's use of *enargeia* answers Saviolo's use of and emphasis on *sprezzatura*. I would argue that Silver deliberately rejects the language of courtiership characterized in Castiglione and prized by the elite of London. He does not dwell on flattery, nor does he abase himself or his work. In short, though he fulfills all the requirements which rank and convention dictate—he engages in the system of patronage by acknowledging Essex in his dedication and he does not fail to address Essex as "your Honour"—he does not stress courtly manners. Instead, he emphasizes logic and paralogic.

Silver's avoidance of courtly manners is part of an argument against foreign influence in fencing. Italy was the birthplace of courtly manners; it was also the homeland of many of the foreign fencing masters Silver writes against. Silver uses bold rhetorical devices rather than subtle manners in his writing to emphasize his rejection of contemporary Italian influence. Obvious use of *sprezzatura* would be akin to Silver using a rapier to defend himself—both originate in the courts and culture of Italy.

Silver voices his distaste for the culture of Italy frequently. He writes, "we, like degenerate sons, have lusted like men sick of a strange ague, after the vices and devices of Italian, French, and Spanish Fencers" (sig. Aiv^{v}). Later he writes, again, "I verily think it my bounden duty, with all love

and humility to admonish them [Englishmen] to take heed ... that they may by casting off these Italienated, weak, fantastical, and most devilish and imperfect fights and by exercising of their own ancient weapons be restored" (sig. Bi^{r}). Silver's abuse of his Italian contemporaries is part of an argument substantially dependant on the concept of an ideal English man who is brave, strong, and, above all, dedicated to his country. Silver seeks to convince his readers to reject contemporary Italian influence in their swordsmanship and sets an example for them by excising all contemporary Italian influence from his writing, relying, instead, on historically trustworthy techniques of argumentation laid out by rhetoricians.

Silver's nationalism and his rhetorical argument were, evidently, good selling points for his book. The book is summarized on the title page:

> Wherein is proved the true grounds of fight to be in the short ancient weapons, and that the short sword hath the advantage of the long sword or long rapier. And the weakness and imperfection of the rapier fights displayed. Together with an admonition to the noble, ancient, victorious, valiant, and most brave nation of Englishmen to beware of false teachers of defence. (sig. Aii^{r})

Words like "proved" and "displayed" emphasize Silver's rhetorical approach. The word "displayed" is particularly descriptive of Silver's style which depends, largely, on *enargeia* for its persuasive capacity. Pender describes *enargeia* as "a palpable depiction that vividly brings before the eyes attributes, actions, or actualities, and it has an irresistible, emotional gravity. By making the absent present," he argues, "it plays strongly on the passions of the audience" ("Open Use"). Silver would have become familiar with *enargeia* through the work of Quintilian and Cicero (Cicero advocates the same rhetorical technique but calls it *evidentia*). In his *Institutio Oratoria*,Quintilian writes,

> I make a complaint that a man has been murdered; shall I not bring before my eyes everything that is likely to have happened when the murder occurred? Shall not the assassin suddenly sally forth? Shall not the other tremble, cry out, supplicate or flee? Shall I not behold the one striking, the other falling? Shall not the blood, and paleness, and last gasp of the expiring victim present

> itself fully to my mental view? Hence will result that □v□ργεια *(enargeia)*, which is called by Cicero "illustration" and "evidentness," which seems not so much to narrate as to exhibit, and our feelings will be moved not less strongly than if we were actually present at the affairs of which we are speaking. (6.2.31-32)

Silver follows Quintilian's advice closely. In his dedication, he combines the emotional impact of *enargeia* with popular and familiar classical examples. He writes:

> If that man were now alive, which beat the master for the scholars fault, because he had no better instructed him, these Italian fencers could not escape his censure, who teach us offence, not defence, and to fight, as Diogenes scholars were taught to dance, to bring their lives to an end by art. Was Ajax a coward because he fought with a seven folded buckler, or are we mad to go naked into the field to try our fortunes not our virtues? Was Achilles a run-away, who wore that well tempered armour, or are we desperate, who care for nothing but to fight, and learn like the Pigmies, to fight with bodkins, or weapons of like defence? Is it valour for a man to go naked against his enemy? Why then did the Lacedamions punish him as desperate, whom they rewarded for his valour with a laurel crown? (sig. Aiv^{v}-Av^{r})

Silver brings images of Ajax and Achilles before the eyes of his readers by describing Ajax's "seven folded buckler" and Achilles' "well tempered armour." He makes these images even more compelling by mixing them with a series of rhetorical questions. Puttenham praises the rhetorical question as "a figure of argument and also of amplification" (170), which is exactly how Silver uses it here. Was Ajax a coward, he asks; was Achilles a runaway? The obvious answer to these questions is, certainly not! Achilles and Ajax are two of the most famous warriors from classical literature, well known for their bravery. Silver chose these examples very carefully. Ajax and Achilles are not only famous for their bravery, they are also famous for their armour. The armour of Achilles, made for him by the god Hephaestus, is the subject of more than one hundred lines of the *Iliad* (18.478-608) and the shield of Ajax is described as being "like a wall ... of bronze and sevenfold oxhide" (7.210-20). These images, rooted as they are in the classical tradition, would have had a powerful effect on Silver's readership. The point these examples reinforce is that properly defending oneself is always important. By using

these examples, Silver argues that, even if rapier fighters have developed an advanced system of attack they have left themselves unguarded by not focusing at all on effective defence. The greatest warriors of classical literature, Ajax and Achilles, who surpassed all others in fighting skill and bravery, did not deem proper protection unnecessary. Why, then, Silver implies, should Englishmen disregard the full example of these men and focus their attention only on offence?

Silver's description of the pygmies of Africa fighting with "bodkins" is another example of *enargeia*, this time paired with a contemporary example. By referring to the pygmies, one of the "enduring marvels" of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries (Daston 17), Silver also engages in the "language of wonder" a language which was not only popular but served the further purpose of "attract[ing] the attention of wealthy patrons and lay readers who might find little to engage them in volumes of more matter-of-fact prose" (Daston 149). By using this language, Silver places himself in the popular discourse of wonder in the period. This discourse and the philosophical writing which accompanied it "emphasized the power of human knowledge to transform the material world" (Daston 164). Saviolo's Italian style of fencing, newly developed in this period, is founded in the belief that the human mind, with the tools of science and mathematics, can improve upon traditional methods of fighting. Silver, too, though he clothes his manual in the language of tradition, demonstrates the ability to develop new strategies to cope with new situations. As Jackson notices, although Silver continually calls his fellow Englishmen to recall their traditional fights, "The *Brief Instructions* teaches a new and advanced technique, that of attack and defense with a single short, light sword" (283). Silver's techniques in the *Brief Instructions* are boldly contemporary, detailing methods of defence for a man with a short sword against a man with a long rapier, techniques which had not yet appeared in any other manual.

Silver uses *enargeia* again in this later section of his dedication where he writes:

> For, your Honour well knows, that when battles are joined, and come to the charge, there is no room for them to draw their birdspits, and when they have them, what can they do with them? Can they pierce his corslet with the point? Can they unlace his helmet, unbuckle his armour, hew asunder their pikes with a *stoccatta*, a *reversa*, a *dritta*, a *stramason*, or other such like tempestuous terms? No these toys are fit for children, not for men, for straggling boys of the camp to murder poultry, not for men of Honour to try the battle with their foes. (sig. Av^{v})

Silver could have merely stated that rapiers are not useful in battle. But he makes his point more effective by presenting his reader with an image of a man with a rapier trying to use his "fence tricks" against an armoured man with a pike. The absurdity of the image makes Silver's point far more effectively than a mere statement would have.

Silver disregards many of the expectations demanded by manuals of courtly manners in his dedicatory epistle. He does not excessively flatter his patron, he does not abase himself or his text, nor does he frame it as a gift. Instead, he fills his dedication with colourful metaphors, references to classical figures, and images of fighting pygmies. Silver's dedication does not follow the same conventions as Saviolo's does. It does, however, capture the imagination of his readers. By using *enargeia*, Silver "forces" his argument "on his reader's notice" (Quintilian 8.3.61). Puttenham writes that "Figurative speech is a novelty of language ... giving ... ornament or efficacy by alterations" (132). In the case of Silver's dedication, the devices he uses provide both. His metaphors and examples decorate his text by making it far more than convention expects and, at the same time, they make his argument more effective by capturing the imagination of his readers.

The writings of Cicero, Quintilian, Castiglione, and Puttenham certainly influenced the structure of Silver's and Saviolo's arguments, but the style and tone of both authors are also tailored to their sensibilities. Each author could interpret Cicero's urging "to vary and intersperse all our discourse with brilliant touches both of thought and language" (*De Oratore* 3.52) differently. Puttenham writes,

> style is a constant and continual phrase or tenor of speaking and writing extending to the whole tale or process of the poem or history, and not properly to any piece or member of the tale: but is ... a certain contrived form and quality, many times natural to the writer, many times his peculiar by election and art ... this continual course and manner of writing or speech sheweth the matter and disposition of the writers mind more than one or a few words can show. (123)

The function of style, then, is to demonstrate one's character, the "matter and disposition" of one's mind, to the reader. However, as Puttenham reminds us, that representation is not completely natural; it can also be the product of art, which means that the writer can carefully shape his style of writing to present a self to his readers which would favourably incline them towards the writer. Saviolo chooses to write in a style that features all the subtlety and grace of an ideal courtier; Silver's style is forceful, argumentative, and logical—all characteristics of a good orator. Saviolo's style engages a strictly elite readership who valued *sprezzatura* and courtly manners; Silver's style, like his choice of patron, makes his manual acceptable to a larger reading audience, many of whom valued the components of a well made argument over "artless art".

Chapter 4 – Masculinity and Honour

In early modern England, masculinity was something to which one aspired, rather than a quality one inherently possessed because of one's sex. "Gender," Fletcher writes, "was not finally determined at birth" (421). Rather, it was an ideal condition from which men could be disqualified through vice. Similar ideas survive in our language today in colloquial phrases like "be a man." The dangers of such vice "were portrayed in terms of a distinct hierarchy of descent from man, to woman, to beast" (Shepard 29). The language used to discuss masculinity in this period reflected this gendered hierarchy of descent—"effeminacy" was a danger for all men and could be avoided by embodying the ideals of manhood. In antiquity a similar heirarchy existed. Cicero writes: "Courage has its precepts and its rules, rules of constraining force, that forbid a man to show womanish weakness in pain" (*De Finibus* 2.94). Manhood, then, is achieved through masculine behaviour, through the enactment of courage and other masculine virtues.

Thomas Elyot defined manhood in this way: "the natural perfection of man, [is that] he is fierce, hardy, strong in opinion, covetous of glory, desirous of knowledge" (qtd. Fletcher 422). Fletcher points out that, according to Elyot, a man is born with "courage, drive, energy, passion, [and] appetite" (422); in an ideal man, these aspects will be in perfect balance. But these defining characteristics of manliness are unstable. Shakespeare's Iago laments, "Preferment goes by letters and affection and not by the old gradation, where each second stood heir to the first" (*Othello* 1.1). Iago mourns the disappearance of a culture in which a man was defined by his actions. In the "old gradation," martial valour would have proved a man's worth. Elyot, too, values the active capacities of ideal masculinity—"courage, drive, energy, passion, and appetite" are all characteristics which provide impetus for action. These characteristics are particularly valuable in a martial context.

Silver and Saviolo appeal to this action-based conception of masculinity in their readers. Silver, especially, founds his argument on his readers' conception of themselves as "men." He shapes his argument around this idea by addressing his work to "the noble, ancient, victorious, valiant, and most brave nation of Englishmen" (1). These descriptive terms define Silver's readers as men according to Elyot's standards. By addressing them in this way, Silver recalls these ideals to his readership and urges them to conform to those standards. The image of the ideal man he conjures is one who possesses all the traits Elyot describes with a few, more specific, emphases. Silver's ideal man is, certainly, "fierce, hardy, and strong in opinion," but the "glory" he covets is the glory of his country, and the "knowledge" he desires is truth. In this passage from the beginning of *Paradoxes*, these emphases are obvious.

> I verily think it my bounden duty, with all love and humility to admonish [the nation of Englishmen] to take heed, how they submit themselves into the hands of Italian teachers of Defence or strangers whatsoever; and to beware how they forsake or suspect their own natural fight, that they may by casting off these Italienated, weak, fantastical, and most devilish and imperfect fights, and by exercising of their own ancient weapons, be restored, or achieve unto their natural, and most manly and victorious fight again, the dint and force whereof many brave nations have both felt and feared. (1-2)

An important word to notice here is "submit." Submission directly contradicts the victorious masculine virtues of strength and courage. By characterizing their relationship to foreign fencing masters as submissive, Silver suggests that they are undermining their own masculinity. The word "weak" in this passage does much the same thing. Weakness was a female characteristic, directly opposed to the strength of ideal masculinity. Weakness and submission are also directly opposed to the martial success Silver expects in his readers. He describes their fight as "most manly and victorious," equating manliness with martial achievement.

The other aspect of Elyot's masculinity which Silver makes more specific is the "desire for

knowledge." For Silver, a man is not desirous of just any knowledge; he is, rather, passionately desirous of discovering truth. "The mind of man," he writes, "a greedy hunter after truth, finding the seeming truth but changing, not always one, but always diverse, forsakes the supposed, to find out the assured certainty: and searching every where save where it should, meets with all save what it would" (3). The mind of man *is* a greedy hunter after truth, he asserts. Thus his readers, as men, should be greedy hunters after truth, a process which requires them to look further than the teachings of Italian fencing masters. Silver suggests that his readers' inherent masculinity should inspire them to hunt for truth and, at the same time, enable them to recognize the flaws in Italian fencing styles. In this passage Silver, again, defines masculinity according to standards of martial success. He writes "But though we often chop and change, turn and return, from ward to ward, from fight to fight, in this unconstant search yet we never rest in any because we never find the truth" (sig. Aiv^{r}). For Silver, the defining "desire for truth" in a man is understood in martial terms. But if "preferment goes by letters," as Iago suggests, Silver's appeal to a nation of English men defined by their martial capacities loses much of its impetus. Silver concedes the importance of letters by writing his manual but his language suggests that he would much rather prove his point in a duel than in written argument.

Saviolo's definition of ideal masculinity is similar to Silver's. He writes, "For by the rule and precept of this art men are taught by how much they are resolute in courage" (sig. Bii^{v}). Saviolo, too, defines men according to their martial skill, but he tempers his definition with aspects of a courtly ideal of masculinity, an ideal that is largely performative and expects men to "show themselves" in a certain light. He continues, "by so much the more to show themselves virtuous, humble, and modest both in speech and action, and not to be liars, vanters, or quarrelers, for those which in this sort demean themselves (notwithstanding their skill or courage) do commonly carry away wounds and dishonour,

and sometimes death" (sig. Bii^{v}). At first glance, Silver and Saviolo appear to be talking about the same kind of man. Both use the words "virtue" and "courage" to describe men. However, for Saviolo a masculinity which relies only on martial virtue is insufficient. Humility and modesty are also necessary in order for a man to retain his honour.

Saviolo urges men to cultivate their gentler virtues. He writes,

> It is fit for a man to consider his own estate, for if he be a gentleman born, he ought even for that respect with great regard abstain from any act whatsoever, whereby his worthy calling may be stained, he ought to embrace mildness and courtesy, as one that hath a heart of flesh, not of stone, more inclined to clemency than to cruelty: to the end his conversation be acceptable, by reason of his sweet and loving behaviour, he must also be in mind magnanimous, not base and abject, as one ill born, and worse brought up: for so will he easily be discerned from that rascal sort of loose minded companion, unfurnished of all ornaments beseeming a gentleman. (sig. Pii^{r})

For Saviolo, then, mild, courteous behaviour defines a man more than martial skill. According to Saviolo, the "ornaments beseeming a gentleman" are acceptable conversation and sweet and loving behaviour, not martial conquest. Men must, of course, be capable of defending themselves physically (otherwise Saviolo would have no students) but, in this case, the defining characteristic of a man is his ability to avoid physical confrontation by exercising his other virtues. A man performs his virtue according to the situation in which he finds himself; different situations will require the performance of different kinds of virtue. For example, when a man deals with men of a lower class, Saviolo advises restraint. He writes, "A man of great calling and authority ought not to wrong any man of the meaner sort, for there be many who, howbeit they be but poor and of no authority, yet they want neither valour nor courage, and will rather die than take any injury" (sig. Qi^{r}). In this case, a man is defined by his understanding of class differences and his ability to negotiate his own behaviour to match his circumstances—namely, by his prudence and decorum.

Silver's martial definition of masculinity and Saviolo's performative definition are not mutually

exclusive. Silver engages Saviolo's performative virtue by writing a well-argued manual instead of killing Saviolo in a duel. Likewise, Saviolo does not exclude the necessity for the physical enactment of virtue but rather demands that martial demonstrations be performed only in appropriate circumstances. For Saviolo, a man is virtuous because of the way he "presents himself" as humble and modest. That same man is courageous because "he had rather die than not to have reason and satisfaction for every word of prejudice and disgrace offered unto him" (sig. Biii^{r}). These seemingly contradictory terms are reconciled when we consider that a man is expected to act according to the situation in which he finds himself—in some instances he must exercise restraint, in others martial skill. Saviolo writes,

> Nevertheless a man ought in all his actions to seek and endeavour to live in peace and good agreement (as much as may be) with everyone: and especially he that is a Gentleman and converseth with men of honourable quality, must above all others have a great regard to frame his speech and answers with such respective reverence, that there never grow against him any quarrel upon a foolish word or a froward answer. (sig. Bii^{v})

A man, then, according to Saviolo, must forcefully defend his honour ("rather die than ... not have satisfaction") and yet must also *appear* to be mild-mannered and favourably inclined toward everyone. His "virtuous man" avoids quarrels by avoiding situations in which he offends or is offended by others. "Shun ... all occasions of quarrel," he writes, "and [do not] fight ... except upon just cause of honour" (sig. Biii^{r}). The most important characteristic of a man, for Saviolo, is not his martial virtue but his mastery of decorous behaviour. His focus should be on "fram[ing] his speech and manners with ... respective reverence" not on presenting and defending the truth.

"Of honour and honourable quarrels"

Honour means much the same thing today as it did in the sixteenth century. However, where

honour holds a primarily symbolic and insubstantial place in our culture, a person's honour was of paramount importance in the sixteenth century. For the purposes of this discussion, when I use the word "honour" I will be referring to this definition (one of eight found in the *OED*):

> High respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation, as felt or entertained in the mind for some person or thing. As received, gained, held, or enjoyed: Glory, renown, fame; credit, reputation, good name. The opposite of *dishonour*, *disgrace*. ("honour, honor")

Honour was tied to the concept of the ideal man in the sixteenth century. A man was, above all, concerned with cultivating and defending his honour. Both Silver and Saviolo conceive of honour as I have described it above—"glory, renown, fame; credit, reputation, good name." For both men, honour is inextricably bound up in the web of rules surrounding masculine conduct. "Men of honour" (Silver sig. Av^{v}), "gentlemen of honour and account" (Saviolo sig. Bi^{v}), and "men of honourable quality" (Saviolo sig. Bii^{v}) are defined as such by their words and actions. Though honour itself is conceptual, the defence and cultivation of it in the sixteenth century was carried out performatively. Essex sought to demonstrate his honour at war and on the tournament field, Saviolo strives to teach men how to defend their honour through courtesy and restraint, and Silver seeks to defend his honour, and the "honour of [his] English nation" (sig. Aiv^{v}), in a physical test of his skills when he assures Essex that he is "at all times ready to make it good in what manner, and against what man soever it shall stand with your Lordship's good liking to appoint" (sig. Avi^{v}).

Silver and Saviolo agree on the importance of the duel; in both manuals issues of honour are expected to be resolved in duels. Similarly, both men agree that it is a waste for men to be killed in senseless duels. Saviolo summarizes the matter clearly in his address to the reader: "I have seen ... great quarrels springing from small causes, and many men slain upon light occasions" (sig. Bii^{v}). Silver writes in the same vein, "to this desire ... I was also moved, that by it [his book] I might remove the

great loss of our English gallants" (sig. Aiv^{v}). Both men attempt to resolve this problem, but the duel itself plays opposite roles in their solutions. Saviolo proposes that the number of men slain in duels can be greatly reduced if men are properly educated in the rituals of duelling. "[I]t were a great shame for one of noble offspring," he writes,

> not to be able to ... discourse of the causes of combats, not to know how to discern the nature and quality of words and accidents which induce men to challenges ... not to have so much experience in these affairs, as to accord the parties challenging and challenged, bringing them from their hostile threats to loving embraces ... all causes of discontent being taken away on either side. (sig. Pi^{r})

Though Saviolo admits that there are situations in which a physical defence of honour is necessary ("if the injury be such, that either murder be committed by treachery, or rape, or such like villanies, then is it necessary to proceed in revenging it" [sig. Pi^{v}]), he argues that, in most cases, words can do what swords cannot, that is, remove all cause of fighting. Saviolo trusts in the effectiveness of courtly manners to overcome men's baser instincts for violence. He urges his readers,

> many think that an injury being offered in deed or word, they may not with their credits be taken up before they have fought, not regarding if they be injured indeed, that they ought first to examine what he is that hath done it, and upon what occasion he might do it: if in word, what quality the person is that spake injuriously, and whether he deserve an answer or no. For a man being carried away with choler or wine, may chance to utter that, for which (his fury being past) he will be willing to make any satisfaction: wherefore it were fondly done by him that would fight upon every word. Neither can I be induced to think, that there is any injury (which is not accompanied with villany) for which with due satisfaction, all cause of fighting may not be taken away. (sig. Pi^{v})

Once again, Saviolo insists that a man is defined by his ability to act appropriately in a given situation, by his prudence and decorum, rather than by his ability to defeat an opponent who has insulted him. He must ask himself about the "quality" of the person who has insulted him and the context of the insult. Was the man drunk? Was he upset by some other event? After taking all these circumstances into consideration a man must then judge appropriate action. In some cases—when "villany" is involved—

the appropriate action will be to duel but, more often, it will be more appropriate to resolve the disagreement with words rather than swords.

For Saviolo, then, the duel is a last resort to be used only when eloquence has failed. Javitch writes that "one of the functions of game-playing at court is to absorb and disarm the destructive threat of competitive drives. At the same time, however, the controlling circumstances, the rules that govern courtly games, teach the participants to moderate their aggressive impulses in the way deemed desirable when they are not at play" (33). Saviolo's treatment of duelling in the passage above bears a striking resemblance to Javitch's description of courtly games. Just as competitive urges are controlled and disarmed by the rules of a game, Saviolo seeks to control and disarm the violent inclinations of men about to fight by laying out rules of conduct to govern their actions and their words.

Silver, on the other hand, treats the duel as the ideal way to resolve a conflict of interest. He believes that a man's virtue is synonymous with his physical prowess on the battlefield. Thus, he proposes that lives can be saved if men are taught how to fight properly. The problem lies, he argues, in "these imperfect fights, wherein none undertake combat, be his cause never so good, his cunning never so much, his strength and agility never so great, but his virtue was tied to fortune" (sig. Aiv^{v}). Virtue, Silver insists, should not be "tied to fortune" but should be reflected in a man's fighting skill. Ideally, both men in a duel would be skilled fighters, and the winner would have his side of the argument justified by God. In this ideal duel, virtue and fighting skill are synonymous. The winner would, naturally, be the more virtuous man. Silver's frustration emerges because this kind of balanced combat cannot occur when fighting men do not know how to defend themselves. Rather than impartially revealing the virtue of the combatants, he implies, duels "in the Italian manner" are nothing but games of chance which have nothing to do with the virtue of the competitors.

"Most manly fight"

Though physical fighting does not seem to ally itself with humanist concerns, there is a long history of fencing metaphors in rhetorical writing. Cicero himself writes,

> then finally our orator must be shaped in regard to both his words and his thoughts in the same way as persons whose business is the handling weapons are trained in style, so that just as people who practice fencing or boxing think that they must give consideration not only to avoiding and striking blows but also to grace of movement, similarly he may aim on the one hand at neatness of structure and grace in his employment of words and on the other hand impressiveness in expressing his thoughts. (*De Oratore* 3.52)

Since Silver was both a soldier and a humanist his straightforward desire to resolve his disagreement with Saviolo physically is not surprising. In fact, his desire to display the truth to his readers is well aligned with the *enargeia* he uses in his manual—what better way for him to prove his point than to, literally, bring it before the eyes of his readers in a physical demonstration? Saviolo, on the other hand, catered to a readership of courtiers and the elite who valued restraint, courtesy, and eloquence. A duel over a difference in fighting styles would contradict his definition of a man as one who only fights when it is absolutely necessary. Silver acts as he believes a man should by challenging Saviolo to a duel but their different understandings of masculinity meant that a duel between them could never take place. Silver recounts,

> my brother Toby Silver and my self, made challenge against them both [Saviolo and Bonetti], to play with them ... at the Bell Savage upon the Scaffold ... Many gentlemen of good account carried ... the bills of challenge unto them, telling them that now the Silvers were at the place appointed, with all their weapons, looking for them ... Do the Gentlemen what they could, these gallants would not come to the place of trial. (66-7)

Silver conjectures that they did not come because they were afraid. However, if we are to take Saviolo's own writings on duelling literally, we can conclude that he did not consider himself sufficiently injured to answer Silver's challenge with his sword. His manly restraint and Silver's manly fight were ultimately irreconcilable.

Conclusion

Ornament is central to Silver's *Paradoxes* and Saviolo's *Practice*. In both manuals, rhetorical devices serve to decorate the text and to enhance the effectiveness of the author's argument. For Saviolo, ornament takes the form of *sprezzatura*, courtly manners, and literary conventions. He follows the rules of courtly etiquette to the last detail, presenting his book as an addition to Castiglione's pleasant, witty-conversation-over-dinner about how a courtier should act. Presenting his manual in this way ensures, "accidentally" of course, that his readers see him as a perfect example of courtly virtue. For Silver, ornament takes the form of *enargeia*. Using metaphor and artfully constructed argument, he follows the advice of Cicero and Quintilian, presenting his book as a continuation of rhetorical tradition. But his concern is largely with practice.

Silver's and Saviolo's styles evidence their variegated epistemologies. S*prezzatura* emphasizes Saviolo's concern for status and appearance; he performs his status through 'artless grace' and courtly manners, and he urges his readership to emulate his concern for decorum. Likewise, e*nargeia* points to Silver's concern with practice; he performs his practical approach for his readers by "bringing before their eyes" images that "prove" and "display" the truth of his argument.

Silver and Saviolo both demonstrate humanist tendencies in their writing—particularly an emphasis on the importance of eloquence. However, eloquence takes a different form in each manual. Silver uses eloquence in the form of *enargeia*, presenting his argument visually: in Essex's coat of arms, in his colourful chameleon metaphor, in the examples of Ajax and Achilles, and, finally, in the challenge to Saviolo. Saviolo uses eloquence in the form of *sprezzatura*, presenting his argument in accordance with the dictates of courtly manners. In his dedicatory epistle and address to the reader, he presents himself as an example of courtly virtue. He follows through on that example by refusing to

engage Silver in a duel.

Puttenham writes, "Wherefore the chief praise and cunning of our poet is in the discreet using of his figures, as the skillful painter's is in the good conveyance of his colours and shadowing traits of his pencil, with a delectable variety, by all measure and just proportion, and in places most aptly to be bestowed" (215). According to Puttenham, decorum—"the knowledge of opportunity of things to be done or spoken, in appointing and setting them in time or place to them convenient and proper" (qtd. "Open Use" Pender 387)—is the governing factor in choosing the style and placement of rhetorical devices. Since there cannot be a specific set of rules for behaviour in every possible context, authors must rely on their own judgement in the selection and placement of rhetorical devices. Silver and Saviolo take full advantage of this freedom, selecting and shaping rhetorical devices which are appropriately founded in humanist ideals yet diverse enough to support variegated use.

Despite Saviolo's unusual insistence that "the first princes and patrons of people did obtain their titles and dominions by force of arms and that afterwards learning and virtue did ... grow and succeed for the making and establishing of good orders, customs and laws amongst them" (sig. Bi^{r}), the existence of these two manuals proves the importance of rhetoric for establishing a place in the world for fencing. As Puttenham insists, poets and not fighters were "the first lawmakers to the people and the first politicians devising all expedient means for the establishment of the commonwealth, to hold and contain the people in order and duty by force and virtue of good and wholesome laws, made for the preservation of the public peace and tranquility" (5). Silver and Saviolo strive to establish reputations for themselves through these manuals but, in a larger sense, their arguments shape a place in the world for fencing itself. In an established state where "preferment goes by letters" the importance of martial skill loses its significance. These manuals strive to secure a place for fencing—Silver's by appealing to

a tradition of masculine virtue as defined by the martial, Saviolo's by striving to incorporate fencing into the rules surrounding courtly conduct.

Silver's *Paradoxes* and Saviolo's *Practice* are two examples of a wide variety of manuals from the period. Early modern readers engaged similar texts on any number of other subjects. Such manuals were intended to instruct readers but, since they provide people with guidelines for behaviour, they are also examples of rhetoric shaping society. As such, these manuals provide an important glimpse into early modern life. These manuals allow Silver and Saviolo to become the "lawmakers and politicians of the commonwealth," creating and enacting, through rhetoric, rules of conduct for early modern fencers.

APPENDIX A – SAVIOLO'S PREFATORY MATERIAL

God save the King

TO

THE RIGHT

HONORABLE MY ſingular good Lord, *Robert* Earle of Eſſex and Ewe, Viſcount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, *Bourghchier and Louain, Maſter of the* Queenes Maieſties *horſe, Knight of the moſt noble order of the Garter,*

and one of her Highneſſe moſt honorable Priuie Councell.

HAuing of late, (right Honorable) compiled this ſimple Diſcourſe, of managing weapons, and dealing in honorable Quarrels (which I eſteeme an Introduction to Martiall

tiall affayres) I haue thought good to dedicate the ſame vnto your Honor, as vnto him whoſe bountie moſt bindeth me: whoſe valour inforceth all ſoldiers to acknowledge you the Engliſh *Achilles*: whoſe fauouring good literature celebrateth your name for the ſtudents Mecenas: whoſe benigne potection and prouiſion for ſtrangers, maketh you reported off as theyr ſafe ſanctuary. This work, I muſt needs confeſſe, is farre vnworthie your Lordſhips view, in regard eyther of method or ſubſtance: and being much vnperfecter than it ſhoulde haue beene, if I had had copie of Engliſh to haue expreſſed my meaning as I would. But I humbly beſeech your good Lordſhip to accept this Booke, howſoeuer it be, as

a new

The Epiſtle Dedicatorie.

a new yeeres gifte proceeding from a minde moſt dutifully affected towards you, that wiſheth and prayeth, that your Honour may inioy many good and proſperous yeres: and is preſented by him that is and will be readie euerie yere, daie, and houre to liue and die at your Lordſhips foot to do you ſeruice.

Your Honors in all dutifulnes,

Your Honors in all dutifulnes

Vincentio Sauiolo.

TO THE READER.

THE meanes whereby men from time to time haue bene preferred euen to the higheſt degrees of greatnes and dignitie, haue euer bene and are of two ſortes, Armes and Letters: weapons & bookes, as may moſt plainly bee proued out of antique and moderne hiſtories. Let it not ſeeme ſtrange vnto anie man that I haue placed Armes before Letters, for in truth I haue found by obſeruing the courſe of times, and by comparing the occurrents of former ages with thoſe which haue fallen out and followed (as it were by ſucceſsion) in later yeeres, that the firſt Princes and patrones of people did obtaine their titles and dominions by force of Armes, and that afterwards learning & vertue did (as it were by degrees) grow and ſucceede for the making and eſtabliſhing of good orders, cuſtomes, and lawes amongeſt them. And then did common-wealths begin firſt to flouriſh, when their Princes were like Minerua, whom the Poets fained to bee the goddeſſe not onely of ſtudies but alſo of Armes, inſpiring wit into ſchollers, and fauoring thoſe that follow warres. Wherefore knowing that ſuch

To the Reader.

men as endeuour themſelues to attaine vnto the excellencie of anie art or ſcience, are worthie both of praiſe and preferment, becauſe they ſeeke for that onely true nobilitie, which is in deede much more to be accounted of than birth and parentage. I haue beene induced (for the ſatisfaction of ſuch, and other like noble ſpirites, deſirous to imploie either their ſtudies in the profeſsion, or their liues in the practiſe of the arte militarie) to beſtowe my paines in the writing of this Treatiſe concerning the Art, exerciſe, and manneging of the Rapier and Dagger, together with the ordering and mouing of the bodie in thoſe actions: A thing I confeſſe in ſhewe the leaſt peece and practiſe (as a man might ſaie) of the arte Militarie, but in verie deed to moſt important, excellent, and noble practiſe thereof. For when I conſider with my ſelfe how ſome Authors doo write, that hunting, hauking, wraſtling, &c. are things in ſome ſort belonging vnto Militarie profeſsion, for that men thereby doo both make their bodies ſtrong and actiue, and alſo learne to marke the ſituation of hils, woods, lakes, and vallies, together with the crooked and turning courſes of riuers. It ſeemeth vnto mee that I may with farre greater reaſon ſaie that the Arte and exerciſe of the Rapier and Dagger is much more rare and excellent than anie other Militarie exerciſe of the bodie, becauſe there is very great and neceſſarie vſe thereof, not onely in generall warres, but alſo in particular combats, & many other accidents, where a man hauing the perfect knowledge and practiſe of this arte, although but ſmall of ſtature and weake of ſtrength, may with a little remouing of his foot, a ſodain turning of his hand, a ſlight declining of his bodie, ſubdue and ouercome the fierce brauing pride of tall and ſtrong bodies.

Moreuer, it doth many times come to paſſe that diſcords and quarrels ariſe amongeſt ſouldiers and Gentlemen of honor & account, the which (when they cannot be accorded & compounded

To the Reader.

pounded by lawe, learning, and perſwaſion) muſt bee determined, and the truth thereof tried by armes and combat. And therefore he that is wiſe, carefull of his ſafetie, and prouident againſt danger, will be at all times ſtored and furniſhed with this honorable vrgent neceſsity, and inſtant ſhortnes of time, he ſhal be conſtrained to expoſe himſelfe vnto euident danger.

Wherefore vpon theſe occaſions, and alſo for that I haue bin thereunto requeſted by ſundrie Gentlemen my good friendes, I haue endeuoured to expreſſe in this diſcourſe, and to make plain by pictures all the skill and knowledge which I haue in this art: Exhorting all men of good mindes and noble ſpirites to learne and purchaſe the ſame, not to the end to abuſe it in inſolencies and iniuries, but to vſe it in caſes of neceſsitie for the defence of iuſt cauſes, and to the maintenance of the honour of themſelues and others. For whoſoeuer will followe this profeſsion muſt flie from raſhnes, pride, and iniurie, and not fall into that foule fault and error which many men incurre, who feeling themſelues to be ſtrong of bodie and expert in this ſcience, preſuming thereupon, thinke that they may lawfully offer outrage and iniury vnto anie man, and with croſſe and groſſe tearmes and behauiour prouoke euerie man to fight, as though they were the onely heirs of Mars, *& more inuincible than* Achilles: *not remembring how it hath oftentimes happened, that a little wretched man of ſtature by skill and reaſon hath ouercome a vaſt mightie man of perſon, and ouerthrowen the vnweldie maſſe and burthen of his bodie vpon the face of his kind & liberall mother the earth. This manner of proceeding and behauiour doth plainely ſhew that theſe men (although peraduenture they haue learned the vſe of the weapon) haue not yet beene ſufficiently inſtructed in the Arte of Armes. For by the rule and precept of this Art, men are taught by how much they are reſolute in courage, and skilful of the vſe of the ſame weapon, by ſo much the more to ſhew*

themſelues vertuous, humble, and modeſt both in ſpeech & action, and not to be liers, vanters, or quarrellers, for thoſe which in this ſort demeane themſelues, (notwithſtanding their skill or courage) do commonly carry away wounds and diſhonor, and ſometimes death.

I haue ſeene and noted in diuerſe partes of mine owne countrie and in other places of the world, great quarrells ſpringing from ſmall cauſes, and many men ſlayne vppon light occaſions. Amongeſt other things, I remembar that in Lieſena a citie of Sclauonia, it was once my chance to ſee a ſodaine quarrell and ſlaughter vpon very ſmall cauſe betweene two Italian captaines of great familiaritie and acquaintance. There was in the companie a fooliſh boy belonging vnto one of the Captaines, who going careleſly forward, & approching neere vnto the other captaine, began to touch the hilts of his ſword, whereupon the captaine lent the boy a little blow to teach him better maners: The other Captaine (the boies maſter) taking this reprehenſion of his boy in worſe parte than there was cauſe, after ſome wordes multiplyed began to drawe his ſword, the other Captaine in like ſort betaking himſelfe to his rapier did with a thruſt run him quite through the bodie, who falling downe dead vpon the place receiued the iuſt reward of his friuolous quarrell. And to confeſſe the plaine truth in this point, it is not well done either of men or boyes to touch the weapons of another man that wear eth them. Neuertheleſſe a man ought in all his actions to ſeeke and endeuour to liue in peace and good agreement (as much as may be) with euerie one: and eſpecially he that is a Gentleman and conuerſeth with men of honorable quality, muſt aboue all others haue a great regard to frame his ſpeech and anſweres with ſuch reſpectiue reuerence, that there neuer growe againſt him anie quarrell vpon a fooliſh worde or a froward anſwere, as it often hath and daily doth come to paſſe, whereupon follow deadly hatreds,

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treds, cruell murthers, and extreame ruines. Wherefore I ſaie and ſet downe as a moſt vndoubted truth, that it is good for euerie man to be taught and inſtructed in the Rapier and Dagger, not the rather thereby to grow inſolent, or to commit murther, but to be able and ready in a caſe of iuſt neceſsitie to defend himſelfe, either at the ſodaine, or vpon defiance and in field aſſigned: for at that time it is too late to looke backe and to intend this ſtudie, as many doo, who hauing appointed the time and place for fight, doe practiſe ſome point or other of this arte, the which being ſo lightly learned and in ſuch haſt, doth afterwards in time of need proue but little helpfull or auailable vnto them. But this knowledge doeth more particularly appertayne vnto Gentlemen and ſouldiers that profeſſe and followe warres, for they more than other men, will (for the credite of their calling, and the honor of Armes) diſpute and determine with the point of the ſword all points that paſſe in controuerſie, eſpecially amongeſt themſelues, who had rather die than not to haue reaſon and ſatisfaction for euerie worde of preiudice and diſgrace offered vnto them. Now in this caſe I am to exhort and aduiſe men of all ſortes and condition, as well the skilfull as the vnskilfull, not to bee in anie wiſe too ſuſpitious, nor to catch (as they ſaie) at euerie flie that paſſeth by, for in ſo dooing, they purchaſe to themſelues endleſſe trouble, and enter into actions full of danger and diſhonour, but rather to ſhunne as much as they can all occaſions of quarrell, and not to fight excepte (as hath bene ſayde) vpon a iuſt cauſe and in a point of honor. And to the end that euerie man may know what to doo, and bee able to practiſe as much as hee knoweth (at the requeſt of certaine Gentlemen my good friends, & to make the world witnes of my gratefull minde towards them for the many curteſies which I haue receiued at their handes ſince my firſt comming into this Countrie) out of thoſe preceptes which I haue learned from the

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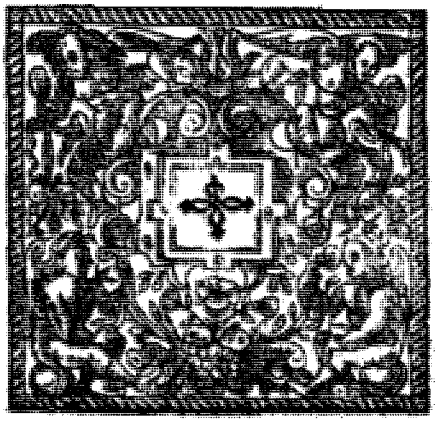
most rare and renowned professors that haue b'n of this Art in my time, and out of that experience which I haue obserued in diuerse fraies and fights, I haue composed and framed this little worke, containing the noble Arte of the Rapier and Dagger, the which I haue set downe in manner of a Dialogue, &c.

Ner of a Diagu Be.

Dagger



APPENDIX B – SILVER'S PREFATORY MATERIAL

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY SINGVLAR GOOD LORD, ROBERT EARLE OF Eſſex and Ewe, Earle Marſhall of England, Viſcount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Bourchier *and Louaine, Maiſter of the Queenes Maieſties horſe*, & of the Ordenance, Chancellor of the Vniuerſitie of Cam*bridge, Knight of the moſt noble order of the Garter, and one of her Highneſſe moſt honorable Priuy Counſell.*

FENCING (Right honorable) in this new fangled age, is like our faſhions, euerie daye a change, reſembling the Camolion, who altereth himſelfe into all colours ſaue white: ſo Fencing changeth into all wards ſaue the right. That it is ſo, experience teacheth vs: why it is ſo, I doubt not but your wiſedome doth conceiue. There is nothing permanent that is not true, what can be true that is vncertaine? how can that be certaine, that ſtands vpon vncertain

grounds? The mind of man a great louer of better truth, finding the ſeeming truth but chaunging, not alwayes one, but alwayes diuerſe, forſakes the ſuppoſed; to find out the aſſured certaintie: and ſearching euery where ſaue where it ſhould, meetes with all ſaue what it would. VVho ſeekes & finds not, ſeekes in vaine; who ſeekes in vaine, muſt if he wil find ſeeke againe: and ſeeke he may againe and againe, yet all in vaine. VVho ſeekes not what he would, as he ſhould, and where he ſhould, as in all other things (Right honourable) ſo in Fencing: the mind deſirous of truth, hunts after it, and hating falſhood, flies from it, and therfore hauing miſſed it once, it aſſayes the ſecond time: if then he thriues not, he tries another way: whē that hath failed he aduentures on the third: & if all theſe faile him, yet he neuer faileth to chaunge his weapon, his fight, his ward, if by any meanes he may compaſſe what he moſt affects: for becauſe men deſire to find out a true defence for themſelues in their fight, therefore they ſeeke it diligently, nature hauing taught vs to defend our ſelues, and Art teaching how: and becauſe we miſſe it in one way we chaunge to another. But

 though

though we often chop and change, turne and returne, from ward to ward, from fight to fight, in this vnconstant search, yet wee neuer rest in anie, and that because we neuer find the truth: and therefore we neuer find it, because we neuer seeke it in that weapon where it may be found. For, to seeke for a true defence in an vntrue weapon, is to angle on the earth for fish, and to hunt in the sea for Hares: truth is ancient though it seeme an vpstart: our forefathers were wise, though our age account them foolish, valiant though we repute them cowardes: they found out the true defence for their bodies in short weapons by their wisdome, they defended them selues and subdued their enemies, with those weapons with their valour. And (Right honorable) if we will haue this true Defence, we must seeke it where it is, in short Swords, short Staues the halfe Pike, Partisans, Gloues, or such like weapons of perfect lēgths, not in long Swords, long Rapiers, nor frog pricking Poiniards: for if there be no certain grounds for Defence, why do they teach it? if there be, why haue they not found it? Not because it is not: to say so, were to gainesay the truth: but because it is not cer-

English maisters of defence, are inestimable members in the commonwealth, if they teach auncient English weapons of true Defence, weight and conuenient length, with the compasse of the Sworde and strength of men to command, because it maketh them safe, bold, valiant, hardie, strong and fortunate, and victorious in the warres, for defence of their Prince, defence of their friendes and Country. But the Rapier in respect not to be weighty, nor sufficient to abate withall, because it maketh men fearefull and vnsafe in fight, to combat, and weake, & vnprofitable in the warres.

taine in thoſe weapons which they teach. To proue this, I haue ſet forth theſe my Paradoxes, different I confeſſe from the maine current of our ouſlandiſh teachers, but agreeing I am well aſſured to the truth, and tending as I hope to the honor of our Engliſh nation. The reaſon which moued me to aduenture ſo great a taske, is the deſire I haue to bring the truth to light, which hath long time lyen hidden in the caue of contempt, while we like degenerate ſonnes, haue forſaken our forefathers vertues with their weapons, and haue luſted like men ſicke of a ſtrange ague, after the ſtrange vices and deuiſes of Italian, French and Spaniſh Fencers, litle remembring, that theſe Apiſh toyes could not free Rome from Brennius ſacke, nor Fraunce from King Henrie the fift his conqueſt. To this deſire to find out truth the daughter of time, begotten of Bellona, I was alſo moued, that by it I might remoue the great loſſe of our Engliſh gallants, which we daily ſuffer by theſe imperfect fights, wherein none vndertake the combat, be his cauſe neuer ſo good, his cũning neuer ſo much, his ſtrength and agilitie neuer ſo great, but his vertue was tied to fortune: happie man, happie

doale, kill or be killed is the dreadfull issue of this diuelliſh imperfect fight. If that man were now aliue, which beat the Maiſter for the ſcholers fault, becauſe he had no better inſtructed him, theſe Italian Fencers could not eſcape his cenſure, who teach vs Offence, not Defence, and to fight, as Diogenes ſcholers were taught to daunce, to bring their liues to an end by Art. VVas Aiax a coward becauſe he fought with a ſeuen foulded Buckler, or are we mad to go naked into the field to trie our fortunes, not our vertues? VVas Achilles a run-away, who ware that well tempered armour, or are we deſperat, who care for nothing but to fight, and learn like the Pigmeys, to fight with bodkins, or weapons of like defence? Is it valour for a man to go naked againſt his enemie? why then did the Lacedemonians puniſh him as deſperate, whom they rewarded for his vallour with a Lawrell crowne? But that which is moſt ſhamefull, they teach mē to butcher one another here at home in peace, wherewith they cannot hurt their enemies abrode in warre. For, your Honour well knowes, that when the battels are ioyned, and come to the charge, there is no roome for them

To this it will be obiected, that in the warres we vſe ſom Rapiers or none at all, but ſhort Swords. To that I anſwere: Theſe are inſufficient alſo, for that they haue no

hilts, whereby they are vnsufficient in their defence, and effectually for the kind, wherby being ſtrooken although with a meere ſmall blow, muſt commonly ye the loſſe of a mã, becauſe the force of his hand being taken from him, he is neither able to defend his life, nor greatly to offend his enemy: and againe, ſince the Rapier-fight hath bene taught, for lacke of practiſe they haue loſt the vſe of the blow.

to drawe their Bird-ſpits, and when they haue them, what can they doe with them? can they pierce his Corſlet with the point? can they vnlace his Helmet, vnbuckle his Armour, hew a-ſunder their Pikes with a *Stoccata*, a *Reuerſa*, a *Dritta*, a *Stramazon*, or other ſuch like tẽpeſtuous termes? no, theſe toyes are fit for children, not for men, for ſtraglng boyes of the Campe, to murder poultrie, not for men of Honour to trie the battell with their foes. Thus I haue (right Honorable) for the trial of the truth, betweene the ſhort Sword and the long Rapier for the ſaving of the liues of our Engliſh gallants, who are ſent to certaine death by their vncertaine fights, & for abandoning of that miſchieuous and imperfect weapon, which ſeemes to kill our frieds in peace, but cannot much hurt our foes in warre, haue I at this time giuen forth theſe Paradoxes to the view of the world. And becauſe I knowe ſuch ſtraunge opinions had need of ſtout defence, I humbly craue your Honorable protection, as one in whom the true nobility of our victorious Auncetors hath taken vp his reſidence. It will ſute to the reſt of your Honours moſt noble cõplements, to maintaine the defence of their

weapons

weapons whosoeuer they be, you possesse, [illegible] with your Honourable disposition, and receiue with fauor whatsoeuer is presented vnto you, and [illegible] with your Lordship right honourable, to weigh with reason, what is fit for me to shall move in this or vnto point of your Honor, which whilst your Lordship loue in your bosome, I doubt not but truth in whose behalfe I yeeld, addeth courage to that which your Lordship hath of late begun to your inspeakable honour, and to our endlesse benefite, to reduce the [illegible] vnto [illegible] plines, no longer than they might [illegible] or any of these respectes, I rest assured that your Lordship will vouchsafe to receiue vvith fauor and maintaine vvith honour these Paradoxes of mine, vvhich if they be shrouded vnder so safe a shield, I vvill not doubt but to maintaine vvith reason amongst the vvise, and proue it by practise vpon the ignorant, that there is no certaine defence in the Rapier, and that there is great aduantage in the short Sword against the long Rapier, or all maner of Rapiers in generall, of vvhat length soeuer. And that the short Staffe

in by should we leaue the head naked, since thereby our limmes & liues are defended, our enemies discomforted, wounded, and ouercome? I see no reason but that the head should be as well armed and prouided for, as anie other part of the bodie.

hath the vauntage againſt the long Staffe of twelue, fourteene, ſixteene or eighteene foote long, or of what length ſoeuer. And againſt two men vvith their Swordes and Daggers, or two Rapiers, Poiniards & Gantlets, or each of them a caſe of Rapiers: vvhich vvhether I can performe or not, I ſubmit for triall to your Honors martiall cenſure, being at all times readie to make it good, in vvhat manet, and againſt vvhat man ſoeuer it ſhall ſtand vvith your Lordſhips good liking to appoint. And ſo I humbly commend this booke to your Lordſhips vvilledome to peruſe, and your Honour to the Higheſt to protect in all health and happineſſe nowre and euer.

Your Honors in all dutie,

George Siluer.

AN

AN ADMONITION

TO THE NOBLE, ANCIENT, VICTORIOVS, VALIANT, AND MOST BRAVE NATION OF ENGLISHMEN.

George Silver hauing the perfect knowledge of all maner of weapõs, and being experiẽced in all maner of fights, thereby perceiuing the great abũſes by the *Italian* Teachers of Offence done vnto them, the great errors, inconueniences, & falſe reſolutions they haue brought them into, haue inforced me, euen of pitie of their moſt lamentable wounds and ſlaughters, & as I verily thinke it my bounden dutie, with all loue and humilitie to admoniſh them to take heed, how they ſubmit themſelues into the hands of *Italian* teachers of Defence, or ſtraungers whatſoeuer; and to beware how they forſake or ſuſpect their owne naturall fight, that they may by caſting off of theſe Italianated, weake, fantaſticall, and moſt diuelliſh and imperfect fights, and by exerciſing of their owne ancient weapons, be reſtored, or atchieue vnto their natural, and moſt manly and victorious fight againe, the dint and force whereof manie

bratie nations haue both felt and feared. Our ploughmen haue mightily preuailed againſt them, as alſo againſt Maiſters of Defence both in Schooles and countries, that haue taken vpon thē to ſtand vpon Schoole-trickes and iugling gambalds: whereby it grew to a commoh ſpeech among the countrie-men, Bring me to a Fencer, I will bring him out of his fence trickes with good downe right blowes, I will make him forget his fence trickes I will warrant him. I ſpeake not againſt Maiſters of Defence indeed, they are to be honoured, nor againſt the Science, it is noble, and in mine opiniō to be preferred next to Diuinitie; for as Diuinitie preſerueth the ſoule from hell and the diuell, ſo doth this noble Science defend the bodie from wounds & ſlaughter. And moreouer, the exerciſing of weapons putteth away aches, griefes, and diſeaſes, it increaſeth ſtrength, and ſharpneth the wits, it giueth a perfect iudgement, it expelleth melancholy, cholericke and euill conceits, it keepeth a man in breath, perfect health, and long life. It is vnto him that hath the perfection thereof, a moſt friendly and comfortable companion when he is alone, hauing but only his weapon about him, it putteth him out of all feare, & in the warres and places of moſt danger it maketh him bold, hardie, and valiant.

And for as much as this noble and moſt mightie nation of Engliſhmen, of their good natures, are alwayes moſt louing, verie credulous, & ready to cheriſh & protect ſtrāgers: yet that through their good natures they neuer more by ſtrangers or falſe teachers may be deceiued, once againe I am moſt humbly to admoniſh thē, or ſuch as ſhal find in themſelues a diſpoſition or deſire to learne their weapons of them, that from henceforth as ſtran-

ſtrangers ſhall take vpon them to come hither to teach this noble & moſt valiant, & victorious nation to fight, that firſt, before they learne of them, they cauſe a ſufficient triall of them to be made, whether the excellencie of their skill be ſuch as they profeſſe or no, the triall to be very requiſite & reaſonable, euen ſuch as I my ſelfe would be contented withall, if I ſhould take vpon me to go in their countrie to teach their nation to fight. And this is the triall: they ſhall play with ſuch weapõs as they profeſſe to teach withall, three bouts apeece with three of the beſt Engliſh Maiſters of Defence, & three bouts apeece with three vnskilful valiant men, and three bouts apeece with three reſolute men half drunke. Then if they can defend thẽſelues againſt theſe maiſters of Defence, and hurt, and go free from the reſt, then are they to be honored, cheriſhed, and allowed for perfect good teachers, what countrey men ſoeuer they be: but if of anie of theſe they take foile, then are they imperfect in their profeſſion, their fight is falſe, & they are falſe teachers, deceiuers and murtherers, and to be puniſhed accordingly, yet no worſe puniſhment vnto them I wiſh, then ſuch as in their triall they ſhall find.

A great iuſt to giue them choice of their weapons, becauſe profeſſors of armes ought to be skilfull with all maner of weapõs.

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